

OUR BEST MOODS.

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Our best moods

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David Gregg

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# OUR BEST MOODS

SOLILOQUIES AND OTHER  
DISCOURSES

BY  
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DAVID GREGG, D. D.

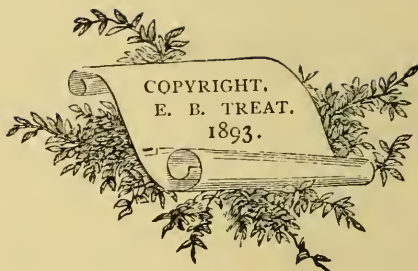
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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

THE discourses published herein were delivered in the ordinary course of the Author's pulpit ministrations; their publication has been urgently called for by a large number of those who heard them.

In this permanent form it is hoped they may prove a blessing to many others.



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I.

OUR BEST MOODS: THEIR ORIGIN AND  
USE.



## I.

### OUR BEST MOODS: THEIR ORIGIN AND USE.

*“And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?”—LUKE 24: 32.*

THE story of the text is a story which shows the play of moods in human life. This is the reason we come to it now. We covet for ourselves the best mental frames, the best states of heart, that by means of these we may reach a perfect *versus* a partial self. We believe that we are made by our moods; so we take up the story of the text that we may analyze the moods which were the hidden forces in the substructure of the nature of these two men, Cleopas and his friend.

Who were Cleopas and his friend? No one knows. No one ever heard of them before. They were inconspicuous and unhistoric. Outside of this story they have no existence. Christ had only forty days to spend between His resurrection and His ascension, and yet He gave a full half day of

this valuable time to the purifying and the changing and the reconstruction of the moods of these humble and unknown men. This certainly reveals Christ's estimate of man's moods. He seeks to make these right in order that He make the man right. He found Cleopas and his friend in one of the lower moods, and when He left them He left them in one of the higher moods. He found them facing the wrong way, He left them facing the right way.

The story of Cleopas and his friend is an exceedingly interesting story. It is climacteric both in substance and in form. It is more like an acted drama than a story. We are interested in the two sad-faced men as they quit Jerusalem, and we enter with them into their heart-sorrow; but when the unknown stranger joins them, and throws his life into their life, our interest rises to a white-heat. The center of their thoughts and of their conversation and of their deep feeling is Jesus. Jesus and their moods are locked and interlocked. According as they see Christ, so they feel; and according as they feel, so they act. Thus it has been for three years. The disciples of the Master have been bounding and rebounding from mood to mood. They have been full of hope, then full of discouragement. They have been enthusiastic, then spiritless. They have had a grand perspective, then they have been hemmed in on every side as with iron clamps. At one time they could see

everything, and then at another time they could see absolutely nothing. At one time they thought that every grand thing which they saw in Him was about to be realized, and they rose up to proclaim Him king; but in a few days afterward these very same things scarcely had a tentative shape. Much had seemed about to happen; but nothing did happen, and it looked as though nothing could happen.

The sadness of these two friends, as they walked, slow of foot and heavy of heart, typified the mood of all the disciples of Jesus. They had a dream of a regenerated country; of an established kingdom with its capital at Jerusalem; of a general transfiguration; and of honors and emoluments which would soon be theirs. They had enlarged views of Christ. They loved the Master fervently. They were fascinated by His teachings. They were awed by His miracles. They were ravished by His tender affections. They had given up their all, and had devoted themselves for all they were worth to Him and to the future which they thought they saw opening upon the world through Him. Now, instead of realizing these fond anticipations which made new men of them, what had come? What? Inglorious collapse! A cause smitten to the dust by the strong arm of the hated Roman Empire; shattered hopes; a complete disappointment; a cruel deception; and, above all, *the catastrophe of the Cross*. These were sad things to

talk about, but these were the only things they had to talk about. The only thing not sad before them was a certain rumor which some hysterical women had set afloat, that His tomb was empty and He had been seen alive. But even that was sad also, because it was such an utter impossibility.

Talking only made matters worse, so that when the unknown stranger joined them they were completely swayed by sadness. Their sad faces framed Christ's salutation: "*What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?*"

The happenings amid which they had lived were so much a part of their lives, that they wondered that any man in all Jerusalem could be ignorant of them, and they expressed their wonder. "*Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?*" They did not know that this sympathetic friend was Jesus. "*Their eyes were holden.*" They were holden by what? Holden by unpreparedness for His coming; by wrong views; by non-expectation; by man-manufactured theories; by ignorance of the Scriptures. No one knew better what had taken place in the community than Jesus. Who could know more of the crucifixion than He? or more of the tomb, full or empty, than He? or more of His reputed resurrection from the dead than He? But mark the answer which

He returned to the question of Cleopas. His answer was this: "*What things?*" This set both of the men talking, and they recounted everything; and more than this, they put their interpretation upon the sad events. They gathered up the fragments of their broken hopes, and put these together again, that He might see just what they had been cherishing in their heart. What a drama this is! We are let into the secret. As we read and listen, how impatient we grow, and how anxious we become that Cleopas and his friend may know all. We anticipate the thrill of their coming discovery. I call this magnificent story-writing.

Their reply to the question, "*What things?*"—the question of the Master—is really part of the exposition which Jesus gives of His Messiahship. He lets them say that they had trusted that Jesus was He who should have redeemed Israel, and then intimate that instead of redeeming Israel He had abandoned the cause of Israel at the critical moment. He lets them say that things are worse now than they ever have been. He lets them say all this that He may show them that Jesus was never truer to the cause of Israel than when He died, and was never so near His triumph as when his enemies nailed Him to the cross. It was just then that He nonplussed the powers of darkness. He lets them tell of the shipwreck of their faith, and enunciate the things that disappoint them most; for He meant to make evidences out of their

objections, and to show them from the Scriptures that the very things which perplexed them and broke them up were the precise things which the Scriptures predicated of the true Messiah. *“Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”*

It was the Scriptures, the Holy Bible, which Jesus used, in order to lift these men from the lower mood into the higher mood. It was by unfolding the Scriptures, and by filling their whole being with the truths of the Bible, that He changed their views, repleted them with rapturous joy, and made new men out of them. Mark this: Jesus Christ the perfect man honored the Bible. He recognized it as the repository of truth. He indorsed it as a divine power. He exalted it as the touchstone by which ideas and doctrines and sentiments and duties are to be tested. He used it as evidence. What is evidence? It is that which satisfies a man from top to bottom—his intellect, his conscience, his affections, his tastes, his emotions, every part of him. In the case of Cleopas and his friend, the Bible, as used by the Master, did all this. The Scriptures opened produced faith; and faith quickened resulted in hearts that burned; and hearts that burned with every faculty on fire, scintillating and corruscating, saw the true Christ. A heart on fire is the symbol of intense life. Now, intensity of life is what we should

possess when we deal with Jesus. It enlarges fellowship, makes us more receptive, and gives us keen perceptions.

With what did the hearts of these two burn? They burned with joy. They burned with a new admiration of Jesus. They burned with a new sense of His mastery over affairs. They burned with a sense of shame, too, that they should have done Him the injustice of supposing that He had deserted them and the cause which He introduced into the world. They burned with the glow of rekindled hopes. They burned with a fresh confidence in the Christ. They burned with bright anticipations of a glorious future. No wonder their hearts burned. They had gotten back their Christ, and He had charmed away their griefs, and had filled them with unspeakable comfort.

To me there is a perfect charm in the way the story tells us how Cleopas and his friend got back their Christ. They say to their hearts, "This stranger is a friend of the Master; he understands the Master; he completely trusts the Master; he thoroughly knows what the Master should be, and what the Master is." Because of this they feel it good and uplifting to be in the presence of this stranger. When they reach the white houses and the lemon groves of Emmaus, as the red sun sinks in the western sky over the hills of Ephraim, their hearts cling to the new-made friend. When He would go on alone, they plead with Him, "*Abide*

*with us.*" When He accepts of their pressing invitation and sits down with them to enjoy the evening meal, He reverently lifts His voice in prayer and asks a blessing, just as Jesus was wont to do in the happy days of old. Then their hearts instinctively say, "How like the Master Himself this new-found friend of Jesus is!" With this state of feeling reached, they are ready for the last, the revealing act of this wonderful but captivating stranger, viz., *the breaking of the bread* which has just been blessed. It was in the performance of this act that they knew Him. As he lifted the bread and handed it to them *they saw the print of the nail in His hand*, and at once knew that it was the crucified hand of the Crucified One that ministered to them. God be praised! The Scriptures are fulfilled! The resurrection story of the morning is true! Christ is alive again! They can stand nothing more than that; hence the most merciful thing Jesus can do is to do what he does, *vanish for the time out of their sight*. He has lifted them into the highest possible mood, and all that is necessary is to allow that mood full play. It will do all the rest. It will take Cleopas and his friend back to Jerusalem, and will make them forever witnesses of the resurrection and heralds of the glorious gospel. "*And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem; . . . and they told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread.*"

What did Jesus do in order to lift these disciples to that high mood which changed their whole life? He did this: by the use of the Bible He put hope into the hearts of Cleopas and his friend. By hope they were saved. When hope is gone, life and impulse are gone. There are no songs in the night. There is no effort. There is no progress. Bunyan shows us this in that marvelous parable of life, "The Pilgrim's Progress." Cleopas and his friend were like Pilgrim in one of his dark experiences. Pilgrim on one occasion fell into the hands of Giant Despair, and the giant shut him up in a black dungeon in Doubting Castle. And how did Pilgrim act and talk then? What was his mood? How did he feel? He said to himself, "All things are at an end. No more sunny roadway. No more pleasant conversation with friends. No more songs in the night. No more the reaching out of a helping hand to some fallen brother. No more gleams and glimpses of the Eternal City. Nothing in the future but darkness, helplessness, and despair." Suddenly he remembered a key formerly given him, and which he had put for safe-keeping in his bosom. He began at once searching for that key, for as he fumbled around the door of the dungeon the question came to him: "What if this hidden key of mine should fit this lock, and turn this bolt, and give me freedom? It may be that this key was given me for such an hour as this." The thought was an intuitive thought, and the

intuition proved as true as the God who sent it. Pilgrim found that the lock and key matched; and with the key of hope the bolt of despair was turned back with perfect ease. When once this bolt was turned the door of the dungeon sprung wide open of its own accord, and Pilgrim was out again in the sunlight, a free man. Looking up to the heights of the Mount of Glory, he saw there full in view the Celestial City with its streets of gold and its shining walls of precious stones. Methinks, too, that his vision during his first moments of freedom were so keen, so microscopic, and so telescopic, that, looking through the open door of the palace up there, as an angel turned the pages of the Lamb's Book of Life, he actually caught a glimpse of his own name upon one of the crystal pages. Of one thing we are absolutely certain, and that is, from that moment on Pilgrim went forward on his pilgrimage with a fresh zeal and an unflagging step. Christ fired Cleopas and his friend with hope. With the key of hope He unlocked the dungeon of the lower mood in which they were imprisoned, and opened for them the door into the sunshine of a higher mood.

There are three points which I wish to evolve from this story, and these I shall now set in order.

1. *We are all creatures of moods, and our moods determine our living.*

For the most part we act as we feel. Emotion is life. Stagnation is death. What is water in a

stagnant pool worth? It has nothing of the music of the brook in it. It turns no mill. It gladdens no meadow. It is water in motion that is life, and that is valuable. *Water in motion*: sailing through the heavens in clouds; pattering in the April shower; leaping in the cataract; throbbing in the mighty tides of the ocean—that is the life of nature. So it is in the human world. It is not the men who stagnate, but the men who circulate, who pulsate, that are life and power. It is the emotive men, the men who have large capacity for feeling. "Modern science has brought out this truth most wonderfully in its great discovery that all forces are only 'modes of motion.' So it is 'motion' with the letter 'e' prefixed—'emotion'—that lies at the heart of all the transformations and all the progress of human life." As men are under the influence of the emotions—love, hate; trust, fear; hope, despair; admiration, repulsion—so will they act. These emotions create moods, and moods create life.

We all know how our moods govern us, and how quickly we pass from mood to mood. One morning I heard a mother ask her little child, who had wakened in good spirits, "*Whom does baby love?*" The little thing answered gleefully, "*Baby loves everybody.*" Five minutes after the child became dispirited; the same voice asked the same question, "*Whom does baby love?*" and the answer this time was, "*Baby loves nobody.*"

What was the cause of this change of conduct? A change of mood. That was all. But that was everything. It meant a change in the spirit and conduct and life of the child. We have an illustration of the same kind in the experience of the Hebrews on the border of the Promised Land. Look into the faces of the Hebrews when Joshua and Caleb return as spies from Canaan and tell of the wonders of the land. The multitude go into raptures over the land when they hear of the milk and the honey which are there, and when they see samples of the grain and of the luscious clusters. The leaders can scarce restrain the army from taking up the march at once. But mark you how in a moment everything changes! The spies utter one sentence which drives hope out of their lives. It is this: "*There are giants in the land.*" This changes their mood, and they talk differently: "We do not care much for Canaan—never did. We do not drink milk—never did. We do not like honey—never did; it is so sweet that it sickens us. The Promised Land, after all, is only hills. Egypt is good enough for us. Let us go back to Egypt."

Life is full of moods. That is our point. There are in it moods of unfaith, moods of scorn, moods of indifference, and Sadducean moods. There are in it low moods, which may come from ill-health and physical feebleness, or from fatigue of mind, or from oppressive rivalries, or from disappointment.

We need rest; we need sleep. In these moods our moral discrimination is blunted, our reason is warped. We have the testimony only of our weariness; we are full of apprehension, fear, foreboding.

Life is full of moods. That is our point. There are in it moods of hope, moods of love, moods of consecration, moods of faith, moods of expectancy, moods of joy, and sacramental moods. These are the better moods, and are full of inspiration and light. They are full of heart-life with its intensities and raptures. In them all the faculties of man are awake and in exercise. Man is clear-thoughted and large-hearted. Reason and conscience and the faculty of vision are all clarified. These are the moods which we should choose and seek; for out of them may be constructed a beautiful and Christlike life.

Just here comes in my second point, and it comes in here for our encouragement. It is this:

*2. There is a way of reaching the high moods.*

Cleopas and his friend reached an apocalyptic mood. The Bible introduces us to a troop of men living in the best mood. Jesus had His moods. It was not all a Gethsemane mood with Him; He had His transfiguration night and His hosanna day. The shepherds had their uplift; it was the holy night. The world was never the same after that night. Something had happened. The old had passed away and the new had come. God had

wrought by His quiet power a great revolution. Run down the names that tower in history, and notice the high place which the best moods have : Bethel was a high mood in Jacob's life ; Pisgah in Moses' life ; Horeb in Elijah's life ; the house-top vision at Joppa in Peter's life ; Patmos in John's life ; and the third-heaven translation in Paul's life.

I urge upon those young in years who are just entering the Christian life to seek the best moods, and to store their natures brimful with hope, that element which is the largest constituent of a best mood. I preach hope for everybody, even for those who are in the midst of reverses. There is nothing better that we can have. No one should distrust hope. It is not a cheat foisted upon human life. It is not a mirage making beautiful pictures on the air of something that does not exist. It is not a *will-o'-the-wisp* flitting before us and leading us into a bog. It is a vital force putting power into the roots of our being. Let me illustrate. Let me take an ultra case. You are a business man, and a man disappointed in business. The most hated thing in the world is your ledger. You hate it because it tells the tale of the wreck of your hopes. Is there any harm in your resting your head on your hand over that ledger, in which the balance comes out on the wrong side, and dreaming that you will have something better by and by? No. Not a bit of

harm. It will refresh you. It will give a new spring and vigor to your future attacks on the problems of your life.

Do our young friends ask me, *How can we reach the best moods in life?* I answer their question by asking, *How did Cleopas and his friend reach their best mood?* They are our guides.

(a) *They reached their best mood by living with the open Bible.*

Do likewise, and you, too, shall reach your best mood. Here is where you get hope. Here is where the bells of promise ring. Is there any grander hope in the universe than the hope of the resurrection, or the hope of likeness to God, or the hope of perfection? These are all in the Book. We want something to implant in our natures the hopes and feelings and sympathies and loves and joys that center in the nature of Christ. The Bible does that. Moods are results. Emotions are always the subjects of conditions. They do not come and go at call. Feelings follow causations. Ideas produce feelings. Elemental truths produce feelings. What mood do you want? The faith mood? The ideas and elemental truths to produce faith are in the Book. So are the ideas and elemental truths requisite to produce the joy mood, the love mood, the hope mood, the sacramental mood. The way into the best mood is through the diligent and prayerful use of God's Word, the Bible.

(b) *They reached their best mood through association with Jesus Christ.*

Usually our best moods come to us from our best associations. Christ raised their minds into contact with His, and this was the secret of their leap from the lower mood to the higher mood. Between them and the Master there was the mingling of soul with soul, heart with heart, spirit with spirit, and life with life. The Christ mood is the highest mood. The result was they reached that. They thought as Christ thought, and they felt as Christ felt.

But I must hasten to my last point. It is the practical application of the sermon. It is this:

3. *There is a profitable way of using our best moods.*

*We should convert them into inspiring memories.*

We should gather them as men gather and store electricity. We should turn them into perpetual fountains of joy. They can ever remain in our experience as reminders of our possibilities. They can create renewed expectations of a second benefit. Cleopas and his friend drew fresh joy out of their best mood after Jesus had vanished out of their sight. "*And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?*" They relived the scenes of their best mood. They treasured their mood as an ideal. They set it up in their life as a standard.

*We should make our best moods the court of decision in life.*

Too many things are settled in the lower court of our nature, where pride and vanity and avarice are on the bench, and where carnal policy pleads at the bar. Too many things are settled in our lower moods when single faculties of our souls only are active and brought into play. In our higher moods, all the faculties of our souls are awake and are at work. Then the mind perceives things intuitively, and the conscience is exceedingly sensitive to right and wrong. Reason is calm, the moral feelings are aroused, and everything fine in our nature is in the ascendancy. The feelings are heroic, and the vision is luminous. The soul sweeps along the lines of its purest ideals. The man feels that he is a son of God. The chief-justice in the spirit of man is above and beyond a bribe. This is the court in which to adjudicate the claims of God and of mankind, and in which to decide as to what is right and wrong, and what is duty. This is the court into which to bring our doubts and cases of casuistry. This is the court whose decisions upon all matters of principle and sentiment and conduct may be counted upon as almost infallible.

*We should translate our best moods into actual life.*

That is what Cleopas and his friend did; their best mood became a journey to Jerusalem and a

testimony to the risen Christ. We should give our moods a practical turn. This is what Jesus did with His highest earthly mood, *His transfiguration mood*. He compelled it to get Him ready for Calvary. He occupied its precious and uplifting moments in talking with Moses and Elijah about the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. Our best moods, in which the pulse is quickened, and the love fired, and the brain made large-thoughted, are only the initial condition of a life more permanent and better. These must result in purposes, and in volitions, and in intellectual states, and in character, and in conduct. There must be, as an outcome from them, a journey to Jerusalem, and a testimony for Christ. Our best moods should be productive; they should give the world something grand and permanent. David's best mood gave the world the twenty-third Psalm; Paul's, the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; John's, the Apocalypse. These magnificent writings are all *embodied moods*. When we go into the midst of the affairs of the world we should take our visions with us, and we should aim to materialize them in actualities. The moods of an interesting and uplifting Sabbath in the temple of God should fruit in a truer life in the home, and in the social circle, and in the realm of business. Our best moods should lay hold on the commonplace things of life and turn them into sacramental things for the service of God, as Moses

laid hold of and turned the cedar wood and the canvas and the fine-twined linen and the gold and silver into a Holy Tabernacle. Every grand thing that has come from the hand of man is simply a higher mood, with its holy feelings and uplifting visions, translated by the patience and toil of man into some serviceable and permanent form. Look at the "Sistine Madonna"! You are lost in wonder at its ideal beauty. But what is it? And what is it made of? It is a common piece of canvas; common pigments; earths; extracts; things which would soil the hands if you should touch them. The maker was an intense soul, and an infinite patience; the whole work is just the best mood of the artist, captured and wrought out, and materialized and made serviceable, and immortalized. Every high mood which God gives us should produce the equivalent of a "Sistine Madonna," or should give the world an Apocalypse, or should fruit in a journey to Jerusalem, and in a public testimony to the risen Christ.

Lord grant us the beatific vision to-day. We need it to ennoble this life. We need it as a solace. So set before us the self we should reach that it cannot be rubbed out in forgetfulness. Help us to realize our high calling in Christ Jesus. Let our whole life be a life of ascending. Make our souls as sensitive to the touch of Jesus as the harp is to the touch of the skillful harper. Walk with us as we journey to the Emmaus of the skies, and

by Thy sweet and tender fellowship lift our souls into the divinest of moods. And then give us grace that we may translate our best moods into the best of lives, into an eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, into the expressed confidence of a shepherd Psalm, and into a public and fearless and consistent testimony for Thee in the midst of Jerusalem. Amen.

## II.

THE PLACE AND POWER OF SOLILOQUY IN  
HUMAN LIFE.



## II.

### THE PLACE AND POWER OF SOLILO- QUY IN HUMAN LIFE.

*"Commune with your own heart."*—PSALM 4:4.

THE greatness of man and the possibilities which are wrapped up in his nature should be the constant topic of man. Man, when he becomes what it is possible for him to become, stands next to God. It is the duty of every man to reach this high place. Man next to God! This is no fancy. This is a fact. Everywhere our minds perceive it. We perceive it as we stand amid the wonderful inventions of the nineteenth century. The masterful way in which inventors have seized and tamed the elements of nature, combining a first power with a second power and thereby making a third power, a new force; harnessing the vapor, and handling the electric bolt, and linking continent to continent—all of these things remind us of the Creator Himself. Using the forces of nature as man uses them is next to creating the forces of nature and giving them a being.

A traveler of note once stood upon the rock by the side of Niagara Falls. But he noticed not the splashing cataract with its white foam and flashing rainbows; his eye and mind were fastened upon the suspension bridge, which the daring skill of man had thrown as if by magic over the river. This was the reason which he gave for his conduct: "All things considered, the bridge is the greater wonder. It is nothing for the infinite God to pour out from His unmeasured hand this stream of water over these rocks; but it is a marvelous something for limited man to bridge this tumultuous chasm." Considering the different factors at work, the tourist was right.

Man next to God! This is no fancy. This is a fact. Everywhere our minds perceive it. We perceive it in the world of human sacrifice. The nineteenth century gives us striking specimens of absolute surrender of self for the blessing of mankind. Missionaries of the cross go into the Lazar-house, that at the cost of their earthly all they may bring eternal salvation to the lost. Within one hour of our city, the other day, an engineer of a locomotive which drew a train heavily freighted with human life saw on the track before him a dead engine. That meant that in a minute more there would be a wreck. And what did the man do? With a divine heroism he sprang to the rear of the wood-car and uncoupled the engine from the train, sprang back to his place and drew the lever, and

with all the head of steam possible dashed into the dead engine with a force which lifted both engines from the track. The oncoming and detached train had a clear way and passed by in safety. But what became of the brave engineer? Why ask that question? There was only one thing possible for him. The man made a certain and an absolute sacrifice of himself, and that for the purpose of saving the lives of his fellow-men. He was so crushed that when they took him from the ruins he was not recognizable. I was on the train behind that train. But little did I dream of the heroism that was being enacted, as I chafed under the midnight delay, not knowing the cause. But since then I have often thought of that heroism, and I have often said to myself, "In grand and absolute sacrifice of self, man, when he is at his best, is next to God." This man gave all that he was capable of giving; God can do no more. Man living the new life, sacrificing, exercising patience, delighting in holiness and truth and love, working out great and everlasting principles, reveling in the pure and the spiritual, giving himself to those who have need of him and of his help, what or who is beyond him but God?

I am not afraid to exalt the greatness of man when he conforms to the divine ideal, and when he is worked up into the highest possible type. To do that is not to derogate the greatness of God. The greatness of God is infinite, therefore eternally

safe from all derogation. I am not afraid of exciting the jealousy of God. God is not jealous of His own. The artist is not jealous of the popularity of his picture. The author is not jealous of the wide sale of his book. The musician is not jealous of his song when it thrills to an *encore*. The father is not jealous of the influence of his son. The teacher is not jealous of the development of his favorite pupil. The developed man is the creation of God, made by the indwelling of His Spirit, and by the molding power of His Son Jesus Christ, and by the teaching of His Word, and by the operation of His providences, and God is proud of him.

How shall man reach the heights which God has opened before him? How shall man make the most of himself? That is the question. To make the most of himself man must deal pointedly and specifically with himself. He may put himself under the best of teachers, but that is not enough. He may choose the best of companions, but that is not enough. He may live in a moral community and become a member of the Church, but that is not enough. He may have a father planning for him, and a mother praying for him, and a minister preaching at him, but that is not enough. He has a duty which he owes himself, and until he is true to himself there can be no salvation, no growth, and no establishment of a true and abiding character. No man ever reaches the

climax of greatness until he becomes acquainted with himself, talks and counsels with himself, respects himself, plans for himself, develops himself, thinks for himself, acts for himself, goes to school to himself, sacrifices for himself, and crowns himself. He must be alone, and often alone. He must talk with God, he must also talk with the great and good of the people of God; but beyond all this he must in the midst of the silence and solemnity of solitude frequently *commune with his own heart*. Soliloquy must have a wide play in his life.

Do I exaggerate the necessity for solitude and soliloquy in life in order to trueness and growth and greatness? Let human biography answer. All great men have insisted upon a certain amount of isolation. Inventors have cloistered themselves with nature and have experimented in solitude. Solitary and alone they have canvassed the inherent forces in the elements before they have unrolled for public scrutiny their amazing discoveries.

It is well known how writers abstract themselves from society, that in retirement they may be free from interruption, and escape the jar of nerves which comes from discordant sounds. Maturin, the dramatist, when he felt he was getting into the full tide of composition, used to stick a wafer on his forehead to signify to the members of his household that he was not to be spoken to. Sir Walter Scott's study at Abbotsford contained one

chair and no more. The essays of Bacon, the plays of Shakespeare, the poems of Browning and Tennyson and Whittier are not extemporized efforts. Each composition which carries in it immortality and feeling and experience and thought is pondered slowly, and when the writer is alone. Now, that which is necessary to good writing is necessary to good living. There must be thought in life, and conscience in life, and the play of imagination in life, if life is to be abiding in its quality, and influential. These things are reached in a large degree only when a man is alone, and can think, and can hear the voice of conscience, and can allow the imagination undisturbed to paint and beautify duty so that it is metamorphosed into privilege. Summon the great men of history into your presence to-day, and see if what I affirm be not true! Moses was the great lawgiver of the old economy; but you remember the solitude of Mount Sinai, where he was wrapped round with the Shekinah cloud. Daniel was great in Babylon, he towered over all the wisdom of that great empire; but Daniel put solitude into his busy life three times a day. It was amid the stillness of the river Hidekel or on the banks of the Tigris that he reached his wonderful vision of the Messianic kingdom. John the Baptist was a wilderness man. It was while on the lonely Isle of Patmos that John the apostle so lifted his being to spiritual heights that God could put the Apocalypse into his soul. In the

perfect human life of Jesus Christ we see the true essentials to right living. There were both solitude and soliloquy in His life. You are familiar with His forty days in the wilderness, and with His midnights in the mountain, and with the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane, with its one lone figure prone on the ground. Such was the solitude in the life of Christ. There was soliloquy in His life also. He talked to His own soul of the chief mission of His life.

The words of soliloquy to which I refer are not many, only a sentence; but this sentence sets in miniature before the soul of Jesus the whole of His life. The words to which I refer were these: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." These words seem to be thrown into the discourse of Jesus, not so much for others, as for His own soul. He only understood them. If solitude and soliloquy were a necessity in the human life of Jesus, what human nature can do without them? Let me point out the essentiality of solitude.

*The silence of solitude is essential in our life in order that we may hear distinctly the voice and words of God.*

No life is great where the soul does not hear God and admit God into its plans. God in the life, and the life in the hand of God, that is what we need. It is the voice of God that awakens conscience in man, and man requires an awak-

ened conscience when he communes with himself. Without conscience he cannot search his motives. Now, motives are the springs of life. The noises of the world drown the voice of God. We must withdraw from the noises of the world. While on Broadway, New York, I have heard many times the chimes in the Trinity Church steeple pour out their music at noonday. But I have noticed that very few of the busy crowds on the street followed the music. There are too many sounds disputing with the chimes the possession of the ear. I tried to follow the sacred song that was pealing through the air, but note after note was lost in the roar of the city, and in the noise and the rattle of the wheels of commerce. The song was broken up into unmeaning parts. There are hours, however, when the chimes in Trinity Church steeple are heard in all their power and emphasis without a break. These are the midnight hours of solitude. There is no difficulty in hearing and enjoying the anthems on Christmas night, or on the night when the bells ring out the old year and ring in the new. While busy and active on the Broadway of the world, God's words fall on our ears; but because of the din of business and pleasure they are heard only in a broken, fragmentary way; but in the secret closet, when business and pleasure for the time are banished, they fall in such a way that not a single syllable is lost.

One of the chief points which we should keep before us is this :

*It is by soliloquy or soul-communion that we become acquainted with our nature, and learn its endowments, and the relation of the inner life to the outer life.*

There is a world within, and this is the greater world. This is the world that controls the outer world. If you want a really lovely world without, you must make the world within bright and lovely. Do not complain of what is outside, the fault is within. All the bitter waters thou tastest well up from depths within. All the gloom that surrounds thee is but the impure exhalation from thine own heart. The discord that grates on thine ear is but the din of thine own disordered soul. Fill thy heart with goodness, and thou shalt see goodness everywhere. Let truth and love glow within thee, and thy outward heaven shall bend over thee without a cloud. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." Get the heart right, then all will be right, and life will be simplified. Then there will be no need of check, no need of coercion, no need of cumbersome externals. If the heart be a thistle-plant, all your circumstances and all your external arrangements cannot make it bear a single fig. But if it be a fig-tree—fig in core and fig in sap—without coercion it will bear figs of itself.

My fellow-men, we need to get clearer and

broader conceptions of the world within, but we cannot do that unless we keep constantly going into the world within. Our soul is ourself, and to know self we must know our soul, but to know the soul we must constantly deal with it. Seek until you find yourself. Go inward and inward until you come to the awful shrine where dwells the living soul. What is the soul? It is the only thing on earth that has been created in the image of God. Each soul has in it wonderful endowments. When the great God smote His hands together and struck out your spirit like a spark into the gloom, and when that seed of fire dropped down through the blind abyss and wrapped itself up in your clay body, it carried in it the image of God. The physical man is not the whole of us. A stranger to this world might imagine that it was from the way we dress it and house it and feed it. It is a wonderful creation; it contains in it all the principles of mechanics, and is capable through a glorious transfiguration of becoming a fac-simile of Christ's resurrection body. There are in it many studies: studies of the muscles, and of the nerves, and of the bones, and of the veins, and of the arteries; but still it is not the whole of us, nor the better part of us. What it includes is the better part of us.

Man in his construction reminds me of what the lapidary calls a crystal inclusion—that is, a gem within a gem. The physical man is a gem, but it

carries in itself a better gem. Here, for example, is a beautiful sapphire from far-away Ceylon. The sapphire is valuable in itself; it is opaque and of a milky-white color; but it is more valuable for what it contains. The inside is so full of tiny six-sided crystals that when the light strikes on its surface you see a beautiful star of six rays flashing like a snow crystal. The physical man is the sapphire; but the soul within is the six-rayed star.

It is the soul within with which we have to deal. The divine precept is, "Commune with the soul." "Understand the life that is going on in it." And be assured there is a wonderful life going on in the soul.

We read in fairy lore of how chasms have been bridged over in a single night by benevolent spirits, by dwarfs, by ouphes, and kindred imaginary creatures. "They hustle vast rocks together and pile them one upon another, and build piers and span them with arches, so that the favorite knights can pass over them to the castle and carry off their imprisoned lovers. Sometimes while the hero sleeps these fairy powers construct whole cities. With tens of millions of hands they carry up walls and surmount them with golden domes, and in the morning whole cities stand where the night before there was only a wilderness." How pleasing for their unheard-of wonders are fairy stories! And yet there is something more wonderful actually going on within every man. There are buildings

going up for eternity. There is not a thought that is not striking a blow ; there is not an impulse that is not doing mason work ; there is not a passion darting this way or that that is not a workman's thrust. There are as many master-workmen in you as there are separate faculties, and there are as many blows being struck as there are separate thoughts and separate emotions and separate volitions. Thus the work is going on perpetually. Every day the myriad forces are building, building, building, and the great structure of character is going up point by point, and story by story, to remain forever.

It is our duty to go into our souls and superintend this building. It is our duty to make this superintendence exceedingly minute, and even microscopic. It is our duty to feel that every thought and every volition is a power, and should not be left to work hap-hazard. Nothing within should be slighted or overlooked because it is called little or small. To the thoughtful man there can be nothing little, and least of all in the moral sphere within. It was a favorite idea with Leibnitz that every particle of matter reflected in a manner, and carried latent in itself, the history of the entire universe. That is to say, if we knew whatever could be known about any single particle, we should be omniscient. All the forces in nature have been at work to make that little atom exactly what it is. Everything influences, and is in turn

influenced by, the infinite whole. From this point of view how unspeakably solemn appears our human life! Almost every moment brings with it at once an opportunity to do right and a temptation to do wrong. Everything we do or say leaves us somewhat different from our former selves, and makes us so much more of a power for good or for evil.

We have seen that by solitude and soliloquy we can better hear God's message to man, and can better become acquainted with our own souls and the work which is carried on within them. There is another use of solitude and soliloquy.

*By them we are better able to form our plans and ideals for life.*

All great and successful workers work after ideals. Even God Himself works in this way, and His works are no greater than His plans. Take the crowning work of God, viz., the creation of man; that was done according to an ideal. The words of God, "Let us make man in our own image," is God's soliloquy, and it permits us to overhear God drafting His design of the man who is to be. Nature works after a pattern. There is a plan wrapped up in every seed. There is not a planless kernel of corn nor a planless grain of wheat in all the universe. The tree ripens to the grade of a purpose that was perfect before the tree grew.

The painter works after a pattern. What he

puts on the canvas has first been a live fact in his own thought. Beauty is prior to the brush. The musician is like the painter in his work; he too is swayed by an ideal. The sheet of printed notes which he gives the world is simply a transcript of prior music which has been singing in his soul. If not, it is worth nothing. Raphael pictures St. Cecilia as entranced by the music that is inaudible. Every musician must first be a St. Cecilia.

The architect joins the company of the painter and the musician. The building is constructed in his own mind before a single timber is cut or a single sod of the foundation is turned.

Christian, you must join this company if you would excel. You must have definite conceptions of the graces out of which you intend to build your character. You must know what truth is, what genuine self-sacrifice is, what manliness is, what womanliness is. You must know what love is, and what it will do; what sterling honesty is; what faith is, and what are its ventures and conquests. All these things must be definite things to you, and toward these definite things you must constantly work. Toward all these things you must plan; you must talk about them to self; you must soliloquize, for according as a man soliloquizes so is he.

*I wish to exalt the value of soliloquy. I wish to secure for it a greater use in life.*

There is no more powerful way of presenting

thought than the form of soliloquy. One of the most powerful sermons I ever heard was preached by George MacDonald. It was upon the text, "Who by searching can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" and it was a soliloquy from beginning to end. The man in a holy rapture talked to his soul of what is knowable of God, and of the grandeur of God's unscalable majesty. In thrilling his own soul with a vision of God he thrilled every soul in the vast audience. Are not some of the grandest productions in literature soliloquies? That oft-quoted address to the soul by Oliver Wendell Holmes, a very gem in literature, is a soliloquy.

" Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
     As the swift seasons roll!  
     Leave thy vaulted past!  
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
     Till thou at length art free,  
 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea."

As I have spoken of the words of Holmes, I might speak of the words of Cato on immortality. They are known in literature as *Cato's Soliloquy*, and are thus regiven by the pen of Addison:

" It must be so, Plato,—thou reasonest well,—  
 Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
 This longing after immortality?  
 Or whence this secret dread or inward horror  
 Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul

Back on herself, and startles at destruction?  
'Tis divinity that stirs within us :  
'Tis heaven itself that points out a hereafter,  
And intimates eternity to man."

Time will not permit me to quote "*The Dying Christian to His Soul*," by Alexander Pope, nor "*Jerusalem the Golden*," by Bernard, a man who has left scores of addresses to his soul, which are all on fire with holy fervor. When a thinker wants to give practical and personal power to his thought, he casts it into the form of a soliloquy at white-heat.

If soliloquy be a power among powers, we may expect to find it in the Book of books. We do. It has a large place and play in the biography of Bible characters. Nebuchadnezzar's soliloquy climaxed his pride and put him under the rod. "Is not this great Babylon which I have built by the power of my might?" The soliloquy of the rich farmer in the parable of Jesus put the climax upon his folly. The man had more than he could use. There were hundreds starving about him, but he determined to hoard. Finding his barns too small, he reasoned within himself, saying, "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" And he said, "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." These soliloquies had

an influence upon the men. As the men soliloquized so were they. There are brighter instances in the Holy Book. There is the instance of the prodigal son. It was his soliloquy that arrested his course in sin and that brought him back to his father. He said to himself, "How many hired servants are there in my father's house who have bread enough and to spare, and yet I am in dire want. I will arise and go to my father." And he arose and went.

There is the instance of David. By a talk with his soul, and by testing it with questions, he reasoned himself from the depths of despondency into the joys of confidence. "I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off forever? and will He be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? doth His promise fail forevermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? . . . And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."

There is the instance of Queen Esther. By a soliloquy she nerved herself in a supreme moment for a supreme duty, and saved all Israel from the sword of Haman. The grandest picture in the story of her life is where she stands face to face with duty, and alone—alone in the place of peril; alone in the place of resolution; alone in the place of heroic action. She said to herself, "I will go; and if I perish, I perish." When she entered the

throne-room of Ahasuerus during that hour of awful venture, she entered with a beauty that had never before shone in her person. Her whole personality was transfigured. She was beautiful with a threefold beauty: there was the beauty of her physical face and form; there was the beauty of a magnificent womanhood—every moral grace at work; and beyond all this there was the beauty of the Lord, which was in and upon her. This last beauty gave her face a splendor like that of the heroic Stephen. That day of soliloquy, when Queen Esther said to her soul, “I will go in unto the king; and if I perish, I perish,” was the day when this woman of God put on her true royalty and ascended one of the thrones of history to rule and inspire human nature, in the realm of the heroic, for all time.

As I draw this sermon to a close, I imagine I hear you say, “Give the sermon a practical turn! You urge soliloquy upon us—give us some forms in which we can soliloquize. Put words into our mouths that we may talk to our souls. What shall we say to our souls? When Christ taught His disciples to pray He gave them a form. Give us a form.” Would you have forms, then ask your soul, “Soul, art thou satisfied to remain what thou art, an eternal stereotype? Art thou worked up to thy highest possibilities? Seest thou nothing beyond?” Ask your soul the question: “Soul, understandest thou what true manhood is? What

is it in man that is man? What differentiates him from the animal creation around him? It is thy faculties which differentiate man from the animal, O soul. It is broad intellect, moral sense, the spiritual nature, the endowment of sentiments which inspire the idea of purity and of self-denial and of holy love. Soul, art thou observing the law of love, and living above the things of self? Art thou a man aspiring after high things?" Ask thy soul: "Soul, art thou willing to pay the price of being something more than moderate? Art thou willing to take advancement out of nerve and bone and brain and heart? To go the way of success means self-continnence, and self-reliance, and self-sacrifice, and schooling, and training, and the abandonment of pleasure, and often a solitary journey. It means the girding of the mind, and the keeping of it at a high tension, and upon the utmost stretch. Art thou ready to pay this price for a character entire and round and complete? If not, the potential within thee will only reach a sight of the Promised Land and a grave in the wilderness. Pay the price and win Canaan! Dare to do your duty at any cost, and believe me, even here, in the very midst of the darkness and the gloom, deep down in the depths of thy being, there will be peace, perfect peace, the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

Art thou a business man steeped to the ears in trade? Ask thy soul: "Soul, what will it profit

a man even though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? Has that man made a good bargain who has bartered his principles for wealth? The world is only an ephemeral atom. At best it is only a golden drop in the immensities of God, and serves only as a comparison to illustrate the spiritual treasures which open before the soul."

Art thou mourning under the losses which have overtaken thy lot? Ask thy soul: "Soul, what difference will these losses make to thee one hundred years hence?"

Art thou a man out of Christ? Speak to your soul thus: "O soul, plead not, I entreat thee, for longer delay. Dost thou mean always to lead me on in the dark? Wilt thou fatally persuade me that there is time enough yet, while all the wise and all the good and all the holy, and God Himself, are crying, '*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*'? O my soul, have mercy upon thyself; yield thee to Him who made thee, who loves thee, and who waits to redeem thee, and who, father-like, is keeping a place for thee in the home above."

Art thou a man seeking a correct knowledge of thyself? Ask thy soul: "Soul, how much of a man am I? What am I for benevolence? What am I for faith? What am I for prayer? What am I for reverence? What am I for work? What am I for that which goes to make up genuine

character? Take away from me all that shall be taken away at the hour of death, and tell me just what I am. Moses, amid the solitude of Nebo, quitting his life-work and standing before God with nothing but his own personality, was grand. So was Elijah as he swept up the steeps of light in the chariot of fire. So was Paul as he stretched forth the hand of faith and laid hold of his crown. Is my personality, considered in itself, like the personalities of these men of God? I charge thee, O soul, to make it such. For this dost thou exist, and for this end hast thou been endowed. I want to be Godlike. I want to live in such a way that there shall be voices going before me into the eternal world. I do not wish to enter heaven a mere nobody. When I pass within the gates I do not fancy hearing a saint here and there asking, '*Who is he? Whence came he?*' I want to live in such a way that when I ascend the angels of God will be proud to accompany me all the way, and the heavenly hosts will be rejoiced to greet me with a shout. Soul, it is thine to make such a future for me."

My fellow-men, I close with the thought with which I began, viz., *man is next to God*. Grand possibilities are within our horizon. It is our duty to urge our souls to attain these.

There are special seasons of soul-communion, when all the faculties of our being are enlarged, and when they are bathed in heavenly light;

when our faith carries in it a vision; when our love is kindled into a bright consuming flame; when our personality is baptized with the Holy Ghost and is penetrated through and through with a mysterious force. These are the seasons for which we are to watch; these are the seasons toward which we are to work; these are the seasons in which we are to see to it that the soul forms its plans and maps out its career. If we take care of our soul during these seasons, *our life will be grand enough to satisfy even God.*

III.

THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST.



### III.

## THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST.

*"The face of Jesus Christ."*—2 COR. 4:6.

ONLY very recently I noticed that this phrase was in the Word of God. I do not mean that I never saw it there before; I must have seen it, for the verse in which it occurs has been a familiar text from boyhood. In my former reading the phrase did not strike the mind. It was only in this late reading that its letters seemed to blaze like letters of fire, and to leap from the printed page into the soul. Since then the phrase has taken hold of my thoughts, and I have found myself repeating it mentally, and interrogatively, "The face of Jesus Christ!" "The face of Jesus Christ!"

The question which presses for an answer is this: How much is contained in the face of Jesus Christ? Our reply is, Everything. In the face of Jesus Christ shines the glory of God, for Christ is the Son of God. In the face of Jesus Christ is all that pertains to ideal humanity, for Christ is true

man. In the face of Jesus Christ is the history of redemption, for everything pertaining to redemption is written there. To one who under the tuition of the Spirit has become an expert in reading the countenance, the different impressions of the face of Jesus Christ, engraved upon the pages of God's Book, form a pictorial history of redemption. The Bible is a photographic album. It is full of faces taken from God's camera. Chief among these faces is the face of Jesus. God's camera has been brought to bear upon His face frequently, and there are pictures here which give permanence to all of the varied scenes of His life. Let me venture an illustration. In this day of photograph and picture making there would be no difficulty in making a pictorial history of any of our heroes. You could easily tell the story of Ulysses S. Grant by means of a photographic album. In the opening page of the album you would insert the picture of the young cadet at West Point. In the spaces following you would insert the picture of the youth receiving his first commission; then the general leading the armies of the nation in the successive battles; then the victor receiving the surrender of Lee; then the President in the White House; then the world-wide traveler, the honored guest in kings' palaces; then the invalid in the sick-room; and then the coffined form lying in state. Each picture would represent a period in the man's life, and all combined would give his

full biography. In like manner God the Father has made a photographic album composed of the face of Jesus Christ. This album is the Bible. As we turn the divine Book the face of Jesus Christ looks up at us from its pages, and these different pictures of the one face taken together give us the biography of the most wonderful personage.

Before turning the pages of this divine album that we may look into some of the Christic faces which are there, let us seek clear ideas as to how the face of Jesus Christ is set before us in the Word. His face is not pictured as we would picture the face of our friend. We would picture the peculiar and distinctive personal features of our friend, so as to give the shape of his physical form, the color of his hair, the complexion of his countenance, the color of his eyes. Our picture would be wholly physical. Not such is the picture of Christ on the page of the Bible. It is a human face, but it is not the face of any particular man. It is a race face, not an individual face. It deals not so much with features and attitudes as with inner disposition and soul. It uses features and attitudes to set before us the pulsing feelings and emotions which sway the man, and the virtues, graces, and purposes which make the man. The Bible presents the face of Jesus Christ, just as it presents the face of Stephen. From the Bible picture of Stephen we cannot tell the physical style

of his face, or the cast of his countenance ; whether it was large or little, long or oval, soft or rugged , whether he carried dew or lightning in his eye ; still we have a clear, clean-cut view of Stephen—that is, we know the very things we want to know of him ; we see him at his best, and we look upon that which is immortal in the man. The spiritual Stephen stands before us with his great, forgiving, and Christ-like love, and with his magnificent attributes of calmness, loyalty, and fearless courage. The Bible sets before us the face of Christ, just as it sets before us the angel-face of Stephen.

It is a remarkable thing in the history of Christ that nowhere have we any clue to His physical identity. The world owns no material portraiture of His physical person. All the pictures of Christ by the great artists are mere fictions. They look no more like Christ than they look like Simon Peter or Nebuchadnezzar. More than this, not only has the world no material portraiture of the physical Christ, it has no authentic description of His material person by which He could be distinguished from Zaccheus the little man, or Bartholomew, who has nothing more than a name upon the sacred page. Coins and statues, in our New York Metropolitan Museum, reveal the features of the Roman contemporaries of Jesus ; history gives a more or less accurate pen-picture of the physical face and form of the great men of Greece, Socrates and Demosthenes and Pericles ; but of Him, the

one historic personage of whose form and face the whole world most desires some knowledge, there is not a trace in the Bible. You cannot tell whether He was of moderate height or tall; whether His eyes were hazel or piercing black. You cannot tell one personal peculiarity of His which gave Him His individual look. The conventional heads of Christ are the manufacture of the merest fancy. The would-be descriptive letter of Publius Lentulus is a fabrication of the fourth century, and the story that the face of Christ imprinted itself upon the handkerchief of the holy Veronica is a pure myth of papal Rome. Why this absence of Christ in marble, or Christ on the canvas, or Christ on the face of ancient coins? Why this paralysis of pen, this silence of inspired biographers? I believe it is from God. God sets Christ forth as a man, and not as any particular man, that He may not be localized, or nationalized, but that He may be what He is, the Son of man, the Son of the race, and that He may belong to the wide world. As His face is pictured on the Bible page, a man of any nation can come to Him and feel kinship. If He were particularized and localized—if, for example, He were made a man with a pale face, then the man of the ebony face would feel that there was a greater distance between Christ and him than between Christ and his white brother. As it is, there is neither white nor black in Jesus. He is a man. That is all. And

wherever you find a man, black or white, Christ is his brother. This is what the Caucasian feels when he looks at the face of Christ in the Bible album; this is what the Mongolian feels; this is what the African feels. In the church to which I minister, Caucasian and Mongolian and African sit together at the Lord's table, and we all think alike of Jesus, and we all feel that He is alike our brother.

We are satisfied with this way of presenting the face of Jesus Christ. While we do not have His features as we have the features of Cæsar or Napoleon or Washington, we have His mind, His purposes, His moral qualities, His spiritual nature. Enough is told us of His face to bring these out, and these fully satisfy us. After all, is it not the aim of true art in painting the human face to set forth these qualities? Are not these called the essence of the man? A true artist is not satisfied with painting the surface correctly, with merely giving features in their most exact proportions; he is not satisfied with putting mere physical beauty upon the canvas. A face beautiful merely as to the physical, a face with lips modeled from Cupid's bow, with chin of Grecian type, with ears like pearly shells, with cheeks white and ruddy, with hair black and glossy, and rippling in waves, and with eyes large and dark—a face such as this will not satisfy a true artist. To him it is like a false gem. It is worthless. Nay, more, it is worse than worthless, because it mocks him with its flash-

ing, and its false resemblances. To him it is like a musical rhyme without sense or meaning. Such a face lacks the main essentials; it lacks spiritual life; it lacks the characteristics of an indwelling mind. While the true artist puts the features upon the canvas in exact proportions, he considers his work a failure unless from the face the character and the life and the soul of the man look out. He wants the face to be the window of the soul. He wants it to represent the man, so that when we become thoroughly acquainted with him and know his inner and secret history we could not imagine it possible for him to have a different face. The face of Jesus Christ, as it looks up at us from the holy page, realizes the highest aim of true art. It introduces us to a living man. It makes His great attributes burn and thrill. It chronicles His tragic history. It opens a wide window into His nature.

Let us turn the pages of the Bible album and look, for a moment or two, into some of the faces of Jesus Christ which we find there. As we have not time to look at all of these faces, our study must be suggestive, not exhaustive.

I. The first face of Jesus Christ which meets our eye in turning the pages of the Bible album is THE HEROIC FACE.

“And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9: 51).

Look into that face turned Jerusalem-ward. It is a mirror. It reflects every dark thing which awaits Jesus at the Judæan metropolis. He saw all—the betrayal, the desertion, the calumnies, the false testimony, the scourge, the crown of thorns, the cross, the divine desertion, and the dark tomb. And yet He kept His face fronting these awful realities, and His feet moving toward them. That fixed face, reflecting the dark future in Jerusalem, is full of revelations and thoughts concerning Jesus Christ which ought to move our souls, and which ought to react in our fidelity to Him and His cause. My soul, what seest thou in this heroic face of Jesus Christ? I see there the whole covenant of God. The eternal purpose and decree of God are in and back of and beneath that face. The deliberate decision of Jesus, after a thorough canvass of every dark and coming thing, is in that face. The resolution of the infinite and unchanging love of the Saviour is in that face. The conscious and voluntary self-sacrifice of Christ is in that face. The whole mission of the Son of God into this world is in that face. All of the features in the fixed face speak, and unitedly they utter with solemn emphasis the one purpose which sways the entire being of Jesus: “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.”

That face tells us that every faculty and power of Christ was strained to its utmost tension. The

cross cast a black shadow from Jerusalem to the spot where He stood, and so dark did it make the way that every step which He took was a new sacrifice of self. Walking from this spot to Calvary was like walking into a dark, dank tunnel—it was a passage from light to central darkness.

Do not undervalue the heroism of Jesus as seen in this face. He did not find it easy to walk to Jerusalem. There were ten thousand obstacles between Him and the city of crucifixion. The sorrowful faces of His disciples were in the way. It took the rudeness of an unalterable resolution to say to the devoted Peter, who led the opposition of His heart-broken friends, “Get thee behind Me, Satan.” The shrinking of His sensitive humanity stood in the way. It took all the arguments and motives that could be drawn from the covenant of eternity, and from the wretched condition of the hopelessly lost for whom He was to die, to brace His quivering nerves and His shrinking flesh and blood, and to give His human hand the power to lift the cup to His lips and turn it over so that He might drain it to the bitter dregs. “He steadfastly set His face!” The words imply a desperate conflict, and victory won only by means of it. This hero-face of our Redeemer speaks of the constraint of every faculty of Jesus in the formation of His resolution to die for our sins. It tells us of the operation of the energy of the Godhead.

We value the heroic face of Jesus Christ. It

helps to set forth the fierceness of the battle of Calvary, which He won as our champion. It sets before us just what true heroism is. It inspires us to a like heroism. That face has been an untold power in the world. It made the apostles Peter and John, and their colleagues. It made the martyrs of Jesus, Stephen and James and John Huss and Jerome of Prague. It made the reformers Zwingli and Knox and Luther. That face will be a power so long as the Church of Jesus Christ lasts. It will continue to make heroes of faith, and to shame the indifference and coldness of professed Christians.

II. The second face of Jesus Christ which meets us as we turn the pages of the Bible album is THE FACE FOULED AND BRUISED BY HUMAN CONTEMPT AND INTOLERANCE.

“And they did spit in His face, and buffeted Him.”

“And when they had blindfolded Him they struck Him on the face.”

We would fain turn this page of the album without looking at this face, but we dare not. Its study is essential to a full history of Christ. It is a most mortifying picture. But it is true to life. Filthy villains fouled His clean and holy cheeks, and demon-moved men drove their fists into His face. God's camera photographed the scene on the instant, and gave it a dark immortality. As we turn God's album, we dare not pass this picture.

We must study it until these dark facts are burned into our consciousness, viz., His blessed face bore the kiss of human treason, and the spittle of human contempt, and the stinging blow of human anger and prejudice.

We must look upon this picture as bringing us two revelations. It is a revelation of the patience of Jesus. Did He resent this treatment? No. There is not a man breathing who would not have resented it. He maintained a golden silence. He wielded the power of forbearance and forgiveness, and showed the world that it is mightier than the power of brute force and resentment. Many of these very men who maltreated Him were led to believe in Him, and to cry for salvation through the blood which they shed. Could He not have delivered Himself? He could. Omnipotence slumbered in His arm. He could have scorched these wretches of humanity to ashes by a single glance of His eye. Did He feel the indignity heaped upon Him? Yes; He was sensitive beyond conception to the treatment which He received from men. He had uttered this touching lament over non-appreciation, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye may have life." He said, "Reproach hath broken My heart." He was keenly sensitive, and yet He bore all this indignity without a murmur; for this was the God-appointed way of saving man. To save man the Son of God was willing to do anything and to bear anything. This is what we

are taught by the picture of His face fouled by human contempt.

But the picture is not only a revelation of Christ, it is a revelation of humanity.

You grow indignant when you think how the men of Christ's day treated Him. You say, "If any set of men in this nineteenth century had treated Abraham Lincoln or General Grant as the Jews treated Jesus, the whole nation would have become insane with rage, and would not have rested until vengeance had done its work." Your denunciation of the men who insulted and crucified Christ knows no bounds. Do not be so fierce. Remember David when he looked at the demon-figure which Nathan held before him. Remember the indignation and denunciation of the Pharisees when Christ held before them the picture of the murdered son. Your indignation is indignation heaped upon self, and upon the nature which you brought with you into the world and in which you live. Have you never been stirred by the questions, "Why did the will of God require Jesus to suffer from wicked men in the way in which He did? Why did not God command fire to leap from the skies and consume Christ as a sacrifice, just as He sent fire and consumed Elijah's sacrifice on Carmel? Why were the expiatory sufferings to be made up of insults, and calumnies, and persecutions, and tortures, inflicted by the hands of the men whom He came to save?" The answer

is this. God in this way intended to give human nature a revelation of itself. Men need this revelation. There is no revelation that they need more, save the revelation of redemption. Men write humanity too high. They must write it down. The air is full of the fulsome praises of humanity sung by a cultured and an ultra liberalism. "Humanity!" How they dwell upon the word, and draw out every letter and every syllable as though it were the only golden word in the vocabulary of man. They could not ring more music into the word "divinity" than they ring into the word "humanity." They discourse upon the possibilities of humanity. They tell of the achievements of humanity. They dilate upon the evolution of humanity. They present the self-sufficiency of humanity. They set humanity forth as having in itself the germs of all possible good. In the presence of the face of Jesus Christ fouled with the spittle of human contempt, we drive the nail of truth through the head of this fatal error. Humanity of itself, and unregenerated by the Spirit of God, has in it only the germs that grow into the crucifixion of Christ with all the horrible crimes connected with that crucifixion. Humanity in itself is only moral rubbish. If it ever becomes a moral cosmos, it must become so by the operation of a divine power outside of itself. God Himself must come down to man and lift man. Humanity, following its own bent, means demonized passions

which will strike the Son of God in the face, and profane His pure cheek.

God has given us this face of Jesus Christ to humble us and to convict us of sin, and to show us the trend of our nature when it is ungoverned by His restraining and sanctifying grace. He would have us turn to our soul and say, "O my soul, thou art the criminal!" Through this face He charges us with guilt, just as Christ charged the Pharisees with the blood of the saints from righteous Abel to murdered Zacharias. They were the children of murderers, because they inherited the spirit of their fathers. Humanity belongs to the confederacy of evil which treated Jesus shamefully. The world crucified Christ. All ages past and present were represented in that solemn drama. You and I were there. Our nature was there. It was a human mouth that profaned that sacred face; it was a human fist that bruised it; it was a human hand that held the crucifical hammer and drove the nails through His quivering nerves. And back of that mouth and fist and hand were the very passions and feelings which throb in our souls to-day. Stand by this face which thou hast profaned, O humanity, and learn the dark possibilities of thy nature. Stand by this face and mourn, O my soul.

III. Another face meets us in turning the leaves of the Bible album: it is THE FACE IN THE DUST.

“And He went a little farther and fell on His face and prayed, O My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me.”

“The purpose of His heart is ripening, the divine decree is coming to the utterance of its last syllable, the prophecy which has been the poetry and light of the world is now about to pass into stern history, and the transition fills the Saviour with agony.” It brings His face into the dust. You can see that there is a weight crushing Christ. You can see that His agony is awful; it is a soul agony; it is an agony which no other soul ever knew. It had to be endured without human sympathy, because it was outside of the pale of human knowledge. The best of humanity and the truest of earthly friends slept when Jesus struggled in Gethsemane. His soul was sore amazed, and was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death. Sorrowful emotions, like tidal waves, rolled through His soul. “Deep called unto deep.” Gethsemane was to the prostrate form with His face in the dust Calvary before its time. His soul ran ahead and anticipated all that was coming, and rolled it up into one great wave; ere He knew it the wave dashed over Him and overwhelmed Him. What was it that agonized the soul of Jesus? Not the fact that death awaited Him; not the consequences of death; but the mode of His death. He was about to be branded as a sinner, and treated as a sinner, and put to death as a sinner. He was

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about to come into contact with sin. This was what appalled Him. The agony which buried His face in the dust was His horror of sin. Gethsemane means simply Christ shrinking from sin. He had consented to take the law-place of the sinner, and to be treated as though He were a sinner, and to be executed as a sinner, and now when He anticipates Calvary, the reality of what He had consented to be and to do breaks in upon Him, and He shrinks back for a moment and cries for relief. When He consented He thought He knew all that would overtake Him: but now He finds that He knew nothing. He had to reconsecrate Himself to His mission, and to struggle against His shrinking from sin until He sweat great drops of blood. "The Book of Martyrs," says Dr. C. S. Robinson, "tells us of a disciple of Christ who was condemned to death by being put in a sack with venomous serpents. He thought he knew all that this fearful sentence meant. He tried for days to accustom his mind to the contemplation. Forcefully he held his imagination up to the horror of the doom by dwelling upon it, and by saying to himself, 'I can bear it for Christ my Master.' And yet when plunged in among the hideous reptiles, the moment he felt their cold, crawling folds against his flesh he lifted his voice in one wild scream of fright and horror. He knew then what he never could foresee, the utter, utter loathing he felt." Christ had often contemplated His treat-

ment as a sinner, but in Gethsemane the reality broke in upon Him with such unexpected force that it threw Him to the ground in a paralysis of horror and grief, and buried His face in the dust.

IV. The next face of Jesus Christ which looks up at us from this Bible album is THE FACE AWFULLY MARRED.

“His visage was marred more than any man’s, and His form more than the sons of men.”

This is the face of Christ when sin and suffering have completed their work. Everything is over, and the face lies cold in death. Every line in it says, “He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” The hand of time takes the human face and works into it every experience through which the man passes, just as the sculptor works his thoughts into a piece of Carrara marble. The whole of your past life is expressed in some form in your face. God can read it there as easily as though it were printed in a book. Even your fellow-man can read much of it. In Christ’s face the whole of His human life was expressed. This is the face out of which His earthly experience looked: “His visage was marred more than any man’s.” Everything wore that face. Read its wrinkles and furrows and cross-lines! Here is the deep furrow run by the divine desertion, which called out the cry, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani.” Here is the ugly scar which the kiss of treason left. How it wears a face to come through a bereave-

ment! Here are the lines which tell how deeply His groaning spirit was moved at the grave of Bethany. How it wears the face to see those whom we love meeting the doom of their sin! Oh the horror and pain which pierce the parent's heart when it hears the crash of the prison door as it shuts his condemned boy into the cell! He would not heed parental warning, nor accept parental guidance. He would go to his doom. One day of such grief will put ten years of age upon a parent's face. Here are the furrows which Christ's grief over the doom of Jerusalem plowed. Here are the lines which the scalding tears burned into His cheeks. Yes, in this face awfully marred we have all the sorrowful experience of Jesus. The temptation! Kedron! The betrayal! The desertion! The reproach! The non-appreciation! The pang of thirst! The pang of the hiding of the Father's face and the pang of death!

His earthly career was enough to mar any face, and especially a face which belonged to a nature so exquisitely constructed. Look on the marred face of Jesus Christ, and read the terrible nature of sin! Look on the marred face of Jesus Christ, and learn the wonderful price paid for your redemption.

The faces of Christ which we have seen thus far are darkly shaded; but dark shading is not the characteristic of all the faces of Christ found in the Bible album. There are faces here which beam

with majesty and splendor: faces overflowing with divine beauty and light.

V. Among the bright faces we have THE TRANSFIGURED FACE.

“And His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as the light.”

The transfigured face is a symbol of the divinity of Jesus. It sets Him forth as the coeternal Son of God. It teaches us that He who was infolded by the Pillar of Fire in the days of Moses, and was called Jehovah by the Hebrews, is now infolded by a human body and is called Jesus Christ. Light is the symbol of God. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” When, therefore, we see divine radiance breaking forth in over-awing grandeur through the worn and tired humanity of Jesus, like an inner light flashing through a crystal vase, we are compelled to accept of His deity, and to teach that “in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” His face shone with Shekinah splendor, because He was the Shekinah. Underneath the transfigured face the inspired Paul writes this inscription: “He was the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His person.”

Why have we this transfigured face? What is the purport of the transfiguration scene in the history of Jesus? That brief night of glory on the mount was meant to play an important part in His history. It was designed to reveal the real person

hidden in that human body, and in this way to interpret the human life of Jesus and to declare its purpose. The life of Christ had been misinterpreted; all manner of falsehoods had been uttered against Him. Men were not able to understand His life, or place upon it a proper value. The transfiguration came to their help. It gave the world the key with which to open it. This is the key: the person who lives this life is a divine person. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This fact transfigures the whole earthly life of Jesus. We see God in it, living among men, and giving the world the freshest, and clearest, and fullest, and most cognizable revelation of Himself. He speaks to men in the eloquence of a divine life. This revelation is better than the face of God in nature, beautiful as nature is to-day in its autumnal splendor. It is better than the autograph of God on the tables of stone. It is better than the writings of inspired penmen. There is not a truth in nature, or in the moral law, or in the Inspired Book, which is not found expressed in the life of Jesus. He embodied all holy principles. He upheld righteousness, and at the same time declared mercy. He magnified the law, and at the same time expressed infinite love. When we look into the face of history the different attributes of God seem to clash; but in the life of Jesus, all the attributes of God are brought into play, and they work together in perfect harmony. Once grasp

the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and you will see in His life "God manifest in the flesh." In every deed of His daily life you will see a gospel, or an epistle, or an apocalypse, in which you can read the nature and will of God. Is His transfiguration face a picture of reality? Then the virtues and principles and dispositions which Jesus exemplified in His daily living are fac-similes of God. They are the features of absolute deity, and reveal the face of the Father. Is His transfiguration face the outburst of indwelling divinity? Then Jesus Christ is the glory of God. He is Immanuel! God with us. In Him we see how God lives and loves and pities and consoles, and hates pretension and hypocrisy. In Him we see how God pardons sin, and cures infirmities, and regenerates character, and transforms human nature into the beauties of holiness.

VI. The next bright face of Christ as we turn the Bible album is THE FACE ON THE GREAT WHITE THRONE.

We can only recognize the fact that this face is there.

VII. One face more, and with it we close the album; it is THE FLASHING FACE AMID THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS.

"And in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks was one like unto the Son of man; and His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength."

The golden candlesticks are symbols of the Church. The face of Christ amid the golden candlesticks is the face of our Mediatorial King, who reigns for the triumph of the Church. Into the marred face of Jesus we read every dark thing in the career of Christ; into the flashing face amid the golden candlesticks we must read every bright thing. In it is the triumph of the cross, and the gladness of the resurrection, and the song of the ascension, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates." In it is the coronation of heaven, and by anticipation the coronation of earth. In the face buried in the dust we saw a reflection of the dark past; in the flashing face amid the golden candlesticks we see a reflection of the glorious future. For there is a glorious future for Christ, and that on the very scene of His humiliation. He must be crowned where He was crucified. Prophecy says that He shall be. I cannot tell how long it will be before we see the sunburst of that prophetic day; but I can confidently assert that we shall see the sunburst. Here it is in the Book. The notes of Christ's triumph ring from Eden of Genesis to Paradise of Revelation. The predictions of triumph flash like electric jets against the black sky of night. The song of triumph is fully written out, and we are only waiting. Waiting for what? Why, waiting for the singing time to come. When it comes human voices on earth will join with angel voices in heaven, and like the sound of many

waters, and like the peal of mighty thunders, they will swell the grand anthem: "Alleluia, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."

A final word or two.

1. *Our treatment of the face of Jesus Christ is an index of our character.*

When MacGregor's boy was stolen during the war between the Scottish clans, and made to exchange clothes with a peasant boy, he revealed his identity even in peasant clothes by the way in which he used the things of the palace. The question to be decided was, Which of the lads is MacGregor's son? This was the method of discovery. Both lads were brought into the palace and watched. On entering the palace the peasant boy threw himself down to sleep upon the straw bed in the servants' apartment, for such was his wont—he was born and reared in these apartments—but MacGregor's boy on entering the palace spurned the bed of straw and chose the best couch in the palace. Everybody said as they looked upon the sleeping boy, at home in the best bed of the palace, "That is MacGregor's son." We are known by the way we appreciate and use our Christian privileges. Among our privileges is access to the face of Jesus Christ. If we avail ourselves of this privilege frequently, if we are

often found studying this face in its different aspects, and preaching the great facts worked into it, we indicate a familiarity with Christ, and a knowledge of Christ, and a desire and a love toward Christ. We indicate that we are born from above and are the sons of God.

2. *The face of Christ affords an inexhaustible and soul-satisfying study.*

Travelers tell us that sometimes they find the path leading to the fountain of the desert strewn with the bones of those who have perished from thirst. They even find skulls, whitened and bleached, bending over the very edge of the fountain. Why? The men dying with thirst discovered upon reaching the cistern that the cistern was broken and empty. Christ is not a broken cistern. The world is. Human philosophy is. Christ is the fountain of life full and inexhaustible. John Stuart Mill once worried himself sad lest the combination of musical sounds might some day be exhausted. Demonstration showed him his folly. The combinations of music which are possible are absolutely inexhaustible. There are thousands of oratorios as yet unborn. Christ is infinitely farther from exhaustion than music is. He will be able to fill and to delight the immortal man throughout eternity. Looking forward to his awakening from the grave, the Hebrew poet sings, "As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." John in Patmos, when he wanted to

put a climax upon his description of the blessedness of those who walk the golden streets and live in the celestial city, wrote, "They shall see His face." He could think of nothing equal to that, and there is nothing equal to that; for seeing His face means transformation into His likeness. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." The cloud cannot look into the face of the sun without being made to glow with its splendor; neither can Moses look upon the glory of God without being lit with dazzling luster. The highest prayer which Christ found it possible to pray for us was, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory."

Let us daily study and contemplate the face of our Master, and as we contemplate it let us in prayer ask God for help. Lord, help us to look aright into the face of Jesus Christ. Give us open eyes. Regale our spiritual sight. May our vision of Christ thrill us and excite suitable emotion within us. May it start new ideas, rekindle old memories, awaken fresh sympathies, revive former impressions, deepen long-made convictions and resolutions which have been born of heaven, and stir our souls to their innermost depths, so that they may join in the song of Christ which is destined to be universal, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." AMEN.



IV.

STRAIGHTFORWARD SPEECH AND GENUINE  
LIFE.



#### IV.

### STRAIGHTFORWARD SPEECH AND GENUINE LIFE.

*"Let your yea be yea ; and your nay, nay."*—JAMES 5 : 12.

MY text is ethical and not doctrinal. This is as it should be, for Christianity is not exclusively a creed. It is chiefly and ultimately a life. It is true that it brings the world grand doctrines and sublime truths and everlasting principles, and it is true also that it demands that the Christian Church shall make such a brief and reasonable and crystal-line statement of these as will make all skepticism concerning them ridiculous ; but it does not, in so doing, look upon grand doctrines and sublime truths and everlasting principles as an end. It treats them only as a means to an end. The end which Christianity is seeking is a *holy and a grand and a sublime life*. The *ultimatum* to which Christianity is pushing man is grand doctrines translated into a true and a living faith ; sublime truths embodied in a noble and influential character ; and everlasting principles incarnated into

an unmistakable and shining Christian life. The Christian religion proclaims and insists upon the purest and highest ethics. If it did not, it would not be any better than the philosophies of the world; and Christ would not be one whit in advance of those teachers who do not make half the claims which He makes. Last week I took down from the shelf of my library the writings of Epictetus, that teacher who was born a Roman slave, and turned the pages of his two volumes to refresh my memory as to what he taught. I found there beautiful disquisitions upon every cardinal virtue that goes to make up that which we call *high morality*. He insists upon the purest kind of ethics in every relation of human life. He lays down masterful rules for the government of self. If Christ did not insist upon the purest and the highest ethics He would be outdone and surpassed by Epictetus.

It is charged against the Christian Church to-day that it expends too much effort upon the insistence of doctrine, and too little effort upon the insistence of a holy and beautiful and morally rounded ethical life. The charge may be true; I neither affirm it nor deny it. But this I do affirm: when the charge is true the fault is not with Christ, nor with Christianity, it is with me, and with other teachers like me, who fail to give ethics their true emphasis and their true proportion and their true prominence.

If any one wishes to see how Christianity preaches ethics, let him study *the epistle* which gives us our text, and let him also study the *Sermon on the Mount*, the greatest utterance of Jesus, to which this epistle is so largely a parallel. These writings are ethical from A to Z. They show that Christianity is so ethical that it means to carry ethics into the very center of a man's soul, making pure and right and lofty not only his conduct, but also his thoughts and motives and desires and inner disposition.

What does Jesus do in the Sermon on the Mount? He simply lifts before mankind the standard of living. He says no spiritual fervor can make up for want of ethical correctness. He puts gospel righteousness side by side with the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, to the exaltation of gospel righteousness. Take one case in point, viz., His interpretation of the sixth commandment. The scribes and Pharisees confined the violation of that commandment to literal acts—to blows and violence which struck a man lifeless. Jesus says to them, "This is very low morality. This minimizes the precept. The precept is more wholesome than that, and far broader. I say unto you, that true ethics require you not only to avoid striking killing blows, but they require you to seek those dispositions of heart which are farthest removed from the infliction of injury. You must be your brother's keeper. Thou shalt not strike the

killing blow! True; but more than that, thou shalt not speak the hurting word against thy fellow-man, nor call him by the degrading name. Your fellow-man has a right to claim your respect and reverence for his manhood; he has a right to stand high in your mind. There is but a short step from degrading him in your mind to inflicting injury upon him with your hand. Whatever makes the heart murderous is a violation of the spirit of the commandment; now murderous thoughts and murderous words do this. '*Thou shalt not kill!*' According to My ethics, that means thou *shalt love* thy brother-man, and thou shalt surround him with the defenses of love." Such is Christ's sixth commandment. It is a great advance upon the sixth commandment which only says: Thou shalt not fire the fatal ball; thou shalt not administer the deadly poison; thou shalt not drive the murderous dagger to the heart of thy fellow-man.

The text is another instance of gospel ethics. It sets forth the ethics of Christ under another commandment, the ninth commandment—the commandment which enjoins upon man the duty of truth-speaking. And here James and Jesus agree. They use precisely the same words. James was the brother of Jesus; both were sons of Mary, and both possessed the same mental characteristics, and both gave the world writings which are text-books in morals.

In expounding the commandment to which our

text refers, the scribes and Pharisees said: "If you take an oath, do not perjure yourself; do not evade your oath; do not make it a dead letter; let there be no perjury or false swearing, or trampling under foot of sacred oaths." In reviewing this interpretation, Jesus says: "Ye scribes and Pharisees, while this is good so far as it goes, it goes but a little way; it is a very meager advance in the right direction; My righteousness would have you so truthful in the core of your being, so constantly straightforward in your speech, that you should never need an oath; it would have you so sincere in heart that an oath should be superfluous; it would renovate your nature so that you should by a divine compulsion always express yourself in words simple and transparent."

In the eyes of Jesus Christ it is simply monstrous that a man cannot be truthful unless he is sworn, and unless he speaks under the threat of the punishment of perjury. If an oath be necessary to make him tell the truth, he is a liar in his make-up. There are some men who not only tell lies, but they are lies themselves. They are false through and through. Such is the ethics of Jesus Christ, that He would educate the world up to a point where there should be no need of a man swearing or affirming or declaring. He gives mankind a standard of morals that is nothing short of the heroic. He would have every man so true that his life should be a transparent *yea* and *no*—

i.e., a life lived on straight lines: no adulteration of the truth in it; no insincerity in it; no equivocation in it; no trafficking in false appearances in it; no hiding behind an ambush of words in it; no circumlocution in it; no simulation in it; but everything real and open and aboveboard. He would have a man so genuine in the roots of his being that those who knew him best could truthfully say of him what Julia of Verona said of her lover Proteus:

“ His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles ;  
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate ;  
His tears pure messengers, sent from his heart ;  
His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth.”

This monosyllabic text, which calls us to a monosyllabic life, gives us one of the manifold definitions of the Christian life. *The Christian life is a life of truth-speaking.* It is a life in which our words match our thoughts, and our thoughts fit the facts. This is not a peculiar definition of the Christian life; neither is it a trivial definition. I know of no way that a Christian can be a greater power than by the right ordering of his speech. The faculty of speech is the greatest gift of God to man, and by no faculty can we make the power of God which dwells within us so largely felt by our fellow-men. I do not wonder, therefore, that nearly every writer in the Book of God exalts the duty of keeping the door of one's

lips. Job exclaims: "Fitly spoken words, how good they are!" Solomon writes: "Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in baskets of silver." Paul exhorts the members of the different churches: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt;" "and lie not one to another;" "but speak the truth in love." He ranks the sins of speech in parallel columns with the grossest forms of the animal passions. John, the revelator, cannot write the sublime passages of his Apocalypse and tell of the glories of the good and true without throwing in a Rembrandt picture, full of black shades, revealing the final doom of the untruthful: "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Luke cannot write the story of the early Church without giving in detail the judgment which overtook Ananias and Sapphira, who were struck dead before the whole church—the one for acting a lie, and the other for speaking a lie. The narrative of this judgment is intended to fill us so full of the fear of God that this fear will drive out from our hearts the fear of man. It is the fear of man that leads us to prevaricate and misrepresent until we wholly lack exactitude and trustworthiness. The story says: Think of God. Speak as in His sight. Order your words before Him. What He thinks is the important thing, for His decision settles destiny.

To these Scriptures we must add that in which

Jesus teaches us concerning speech. In Him brighter and brighter grows the light which searches out all wrong, and finer and finer become the meshes which catch and sift out and reveal the unfitness which mars the character of those who should be pure in heart. These are the Master's words: "I say unto you that every idle word that men shall utter, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned." These words are pungent and sobering to thought. They ought to stimulate to moral earnestness. Do they mean that if I speak an idle word, or a trivial word, that that word will doom me forever to banishment from God and consign me forever to hopeless degradation? Certainly not. The words of Jesus are severe, but they are not so severe as that. They do say that every idle word is a deteriorating force, and consequently ought to be avoided; but they do not make the one idle word the sole basis of the judgment placed opposite our names. Our other words will be taken into the account as well—our good words and true words and brave words. Our characters will be balanced by the review of all our words; an average will be struck. Our idle words will discount the words which we have filled with nobility of soul; they will cut down our grade and standing before God. That is all. *But that is bad enough.* That is enough to stimulate any man

ambitious to make the most of himself and to stand well with God to say, "*I will eschew idle words.*" Christ does not wish to scare us to death; but He does wish to point out our real danger, and to urge us to such excellency of speech as will edify society and help in the building up of self, and finally win for us the "well-done" and welcome of God.

To these foregoing Scriptures we must add the text. The text is radical; it goes down to the roots of human life. Its brief words weigh tons. They strike all hypocrisy out of life. They strike all compromise with evil out of life. They compel a man to take sides in every great struggle between right and wrong, between truth and error, between the wholesome and the hurtful, between the genuine and the false. We must give an unhesitating "*yea*" to the cause of the good in the world—i.e., our allegiance to the cause of the good must be one of absolute loyalty and of complete self-surrender; and we must give an uncompromising and unchangeable "*nay*" to the solicitation of the cause of evil in the world—i.e., our opposition to evil in all its forms must be unqualified and deep-seated and fearless and manifest. We must throw ourselves against evil for all we are worth. This is what it means to be a "*yea-man*" and a "*nay-man*." The terms "*yea*" and "*nay*" are the heaviest-charged words in human language. The spoken "*yea*" is the marriage of the will to

the good; and the spoken "*nay*" is the *veto-power* of the will putting the stamp of condemnation upon the evil. They both carry character in them, and they are both the symbols of strength and of rocky ability and of granite fiber in a man's moral nature. When we penetrate to the lowest roots of our actions in life and find how our actions originate, we find that the seed of everything is a "*yea*" or a "*nay*"—i.e., the seed of every action is a *choice* or a *refusal*. Since this is so, I aver that it is essential that in our motives and in our speech and in our deeds this "*yea power*" and this "*nay power*" which mold and shape and develop our lives shall be truthfully and rightly exercised.

When our choices and our refusals are radically right, our speech and our character will be strong and beautiful with a "*yea*" and "*nay*" simplicity and transparency. We will not violate the canon of politeness; we will not be rude or boorish, or gruff in conduct; we will not be social Bohemians; but we will be true and truthful, precisionists in speech, and haters of exaggerated ears and tongues, and the enemies of all sham and hypocrisy.

In order to make the treatment of our theme profitable I propose to present one reason enforcing genuine life and straightforward speech upon the part of God's people; and after that I propose to point out the only effective way of reaching these characteristics.

*The abounding falsities of life amid which we*

*live, this is the reason why we who profess to be the people of God should be truthful in conduct and straightforward in speech.*

These abounding falsities must be rebuked ; but who will rebuke them if Christians do not ? It is imperative that somebody testify that these are not in accord with the pure ethics of the gospel of Christ. But where are these abounding falsities ? Everywhere in human society. They are in the theories which men hold, and they are in the practices which men follow.

The popular theory, viz., *that success purchased at any cost is the chief good of man*, is an example. This is the theory which weighs hosts of men. Robert Browning shows us the working of this theory in his poem called "Bishop Blougram's Apology." The story of the poem is this : Two young men, classmates, had separated upon graduation day, and had gone their respective ways. One had become a bishop ; the other had reached nothing so far as fame went, but he had succeeded in keeping true to his conscience. The two met again in after-years. The bishop invited his old comrade to dine with him, and over the wine after dinner he laid before him his philosophy of life. Half wise, half cynical, half sneering, he pointed out the fact that he had won success, fame, money, power, honor, distinction. His boast was : "I stand here on the pinnacle of fame ; but you, poor fellow, when you came to the point where the path

turned to fame, allowed your conscience to interfere." In the poem Browning makes it clear that at the bottom of his soul the bishop is an utter skeptic. He does not believe in his creed, nor in the God he worships, nor in the heaven he has been trying to induce men to enter. He does not feel quite sure of anything except that he is bishop. But so long as he has the highest success he is willing to chance it on all other things. The great mass of people live their lives according to this philosophy. Success at any cost is their goal. Now, against this false philosophy it is our duty to lift up Christ, by being among men Christlike, and by putting truth and truth-speaking and truth-acting above immediate and near success as a goal. Christ's policy of life was the very opposite of the policy followed by Bishop Blougram. You remember one occasion when He spoke the truth so fully and so clearly that it is recorded, "On that day many went back and followed Him no more." He might have rationally argued: "I am losing My hold upon the people; *better modify*; better cater to the multitude a little, for if I keep them I can influence them." But Jesus did not argue thus. He just kept straight on speaking the truth in His usual way. The result was the nation left Him; the multitudes whom He fed left Him; the seventy whom He commissioned left Him; even His own chosen twelve left Him; He stood alone between heaven and earth, with a malefactor on

one side of Him and a malefactor on the other side of Him, and with His life-work an utter wreck about His feet. But what has taken place since? Simply because He was honest, and stood in His integrity, and uttered the truth, He holds to-day a universal power, and is an eternal success. It was the lifting of Christ on the hill of Calvary that made Calvary the loftiest mountain on the globe. It costs to be true, but in the end it pays. Men will brand you a faddist, and a fanatic, and a Utopian enthusiast, and an unpractical dreamer, and a grand humbug; but if you are true, your influence for good will grow.

If you fearlessly rebuke falsehood and vice you must expect to be treated as Bunyan tells us Faithful was treated in *Vanity Fair*. John Bunyan was gifted with keen insight. He thus describes the experience of Faithful: "On the testimony of Mr. Envy, the jury under my Lord Hategood unanimously brought in Faithful guilty. 'I see clearly that this man is a heretic,' said Mr. Blindman. Then said Mr. Nogood, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth.' 'Ay,' said Mr. Malice, 'for I hate the very looks of him.' Then said Mr. Love-lust, 'I never could endure him.' 'Nor I,' said Mr. Live-loose, 'for he would be always condemning my way.' 'Hang him, hang him,' cried Mr. Heady. 'A sorry scrub,' said Mr. Highmind. 'My heart riseth against him,' said Mr. Enmity. 'He is a rogue,' said Mr. Liar,

‘Hanging is too good for him,’ said Mr. Cruelty. ‘Let us dispatch him out of the way,’ said Mr. Hate-light. Then said Mr. Implacable, ‘Might I have all the world given me, I could not be reconciled to him.’ So they brought Faithful out, and scourged him, and buffeted him, and lanced his flesh with knives, and stoned him, and at last burned him to ashes at the stake.” But was that the end of Faithful? No. You feel his power, and so do I. His martyrdom crowned him with an undying influence. Thus it is: straightforward, uncompromising, heroic speech and act are the grandest things in the universe. Let a man do right with such earnestness that he counts his life of but little value, and his example will become well-nigh omnipotent.

But let me come back more closely to my point. I am speaking of the *abounding falsities* in human life which call for the rebuke of genuine, living, and straightforward speech.

*There are falsities of speech.* “Evil” is called “good,” and “good” is called “evil,” notwithstanding God has pronounced a woe against such an interchange of names. Does a man show deep feeling in a reform or in a righteous cause, men stab him by calling him morbid, histrionic, hysterical, lachrymose. The great sin of speech is the using of misnomers in describing sin. False names transfigure sin and conceal its deadly essence. They popularize sin. The use of euphemisms in

characterizing sin thrones sin and crowns sin. It is all wrong, and should be denounced. Permit me to give you one concrete case illustrative of this evil—a case in which the sin of bribery is treated in a jocose, euphemistic way. In a legislature of one of our largest Eastern States, a member arose and said, “Gentlemen of the legislature, a fellow-member yesterday came and asked me to cast my vote in favor of the measure we have just discussed, and as an inducement he offered me five hundred reasons in favor of casting my vote as he dictated.” The house became at once uproarious over these pleasing words. But what did that senator do? He degraded human language. He played with the most deadly fire that blazes in human society. He painted a hideous sin with attractive colors. He wrapped a rainbow around a fatal bolt from the storm-center of hell. He took the highest word in our language, “*reason*,” that word which signifies the divinely given power of discrimination and choice, and degraded it into a synonym of that foul word “*bribery*.” When the only words which we have to designate the personification of nobleness, manliness, courtesy, truth, uprightness, purity, honesty, are systematically applied to all that is contemptible and vile, who can doubt that these high qualities themselves will ultimately share in the debasement to which their proper names are subjected? Who does not see how vast a difference it must make in our estimate of any species

of wickedness, whether we are wont to designate it, or to hear it designated, by a word which brings out its hatefulness, or by a word which palliates it and glosses it. It is an impressive fact, noticed by all moralists, that indulgence in verbal vice speedily leads to corresponding vice in conduct. Christians, call things by their right names. Right wording leads to right thinking, and right thinking leads to right living.

In speaking of the abounding falsities of life, we must not overlook *the falsities of trade*. Trade is a wide field demanding truth. Untruth disintegrates and enfeebles the affairs of business. No field demands truth more, because in no field are there so many false ways followed and so many false things tolerated. Here is where you find trick, and fraud, and insincerity, and dishonesty, and untruthfulness, and adulterations, and false appearances, and sly duplicities. Here you find organized dishonesty, and structural lies, and wholesale robbery. Here you find everything but truth in the inward parts. Third-class articles bear first-class brands. There is an element of fraud running through almost everything that is offered for sale. The colors are bright, the surface is good, that people may be deceived into the belief that the entire article is good. Food is adulterated, and so is medicine. The anvil has learned to lie, and so has the loom. Silk, wool, cotton, hemp, flour, sugar, coffee, milk, are all of them liars. But

what are the people who make them what they are? What astonishes me is this: sometimes I find men who stand high in the church, and who think they are religious and acceptable to God and eminently spiritual, and who talk of the indwelling Spirit, and who delight in sweet reveries upon heaven, and who go up like a sky-rocket in prayer-meeting and in missionary-meeting, but who, when scrutinized in their business life, amid the rivalries and the push of trade, are found to have organized into the very thread and fabric of their career, indirections, equivocations, smartness, and bounce, and an agility in turning sharp corners that always bring them out best in a bargain. They are hypocrites. I am not so sure about that. They are perfectly sincere in prayer-meeting, and in their aspirations in church, and in their preferences for the good things of heaven. No, they are not hypocrites. Their natures respond to the influences under which they are; that is not hypocrisy. The difference between them in church and in the store is this: they are under different influences in the different places. The enunciation of gospel principles in church acts upon them differently from the pressure of business rivalries in the store, that is all. What they need is to keep themselves always under the voice of gospel principles. They respond to these when they are under these; their natures are true enough for that; it is their duty, therefore, to keep themselves under these, and thus

make their life in the church and in the store match. There is large room in business for men of truth; for "*yea-men*" and "*nay-men*." They can build business upon a permanent basis. They can protect it against panic. They can inspire a confidence which will make money and property safe. They can make business a school of high morals in which the finest type of character shall be developed.

But I must speak now of the way of reaching truthfulness in life and straightforwardness of speech.

1. *These are reached first by great care in the selection and use of words.*

Do we realize the power of words? Do we realize what they represent? They represent us. Our words are as much our own as our thoughts are. They are the incarnation of our thoughts, just as our body is the incarnation of our soul. If you change our words, you change our thought. Now, if we are to represent ourselves correctly, we must see to it that we choose correct words. We can make words do whatever we wish; we should wish them to do what is square and upright and edifying. Words are the armory of the human mind. I have seen in the United States arsenal the great cannon-balls piled up in large pyramids. Piled up in that way they are harmless; but put them before the powder in the bore of the massive gun, and they become thunderbolts. Words in the dictionary, tiered and piled up in rows, are harm-

less; but when they receive the vitalizing touch of genius, they become endowed with tremendous energy, and leap with life. Let them be used by the mighty enginery of thought—i.e., by the brain of a Webster, or a Phillips, or a Bright, or a Gladstone,—and they become irresistible arguments, which establish national causes and give eternal life to great humanitarian movements. Coming from the lips of a master-spirit, and instinct with his individuality, they carry in them the power of the whole man.

If I were to throw out a thought with regard to the character of the words which we should use, I should give utterance to that thought suggested by the text, viz., *use the simplest words*—words which are sunbeams in human speech; words of the “*yea*” and “*nay*” order. You cannot equivocate with such words. You have got to tell the truth, or else lie out and out. These are the words which the strongest writers use. Books which deal in monosyllabics are immortal. The grand and tender passages in the English Bible are those which are couched almost entirely in words of one syllable—the twenty-third Psalm, David’s lament over Saul and Jonathan, the Gospel according to John, are instances. The finest sentence ever uttered in human language is said to be that which refers to the creation of light: “*And God said, Let there be light; and there was light.*” But every word in this noted sentence is a single syllable. It is with words as it is with sunbeams: the more they

are condensed the deeper they burn. I call that strong speech in which small words form not only the bolts and hinges and pins, but form also the chief material in the structure of verse or paragraph. I do not know that I can better give you my idea of the strength and value of small words than by quoting a little poem translated from the German and published lately in *The New York School Journal*. It is unique in its way, and worth its weight in gold. It runs on this wise :

“ Six little words do claim me every day,  
    *Shall, must, and can, with will and ought and may.*

“ *Shall* is the law within inscribed by Heaven,  
    The goal to which I by myself am driven.

“ *Must* is the bound not to be overpast,  
    Where by the world and nature I'm held fast.

“ *Can* is the measure of my personal dower,  
    Of deed and art, science and practiced power.

“ *Will* is my noblest crown, my brightest, best,  
    Freedom's own seal upon my soul imprest.

“ *Ought* the inscription on the seal set fair  
    On Freedom's open door, a bolt 'tis there.

“ And lastly *may* 'mong courses mixed,  
    The vaguely possible by the moment fixed.

“ *Shall, must, and can, with will and ought and may,*  
    These are the six that claim me every day.

“ Only when God doth teach do I know what each day  
    I shall, I must, I can, I will, I ought, I may.”

I have one more point to present. It is this:

2. *Straightforward speech and genuineness of life must have back of them a genuine and straightforward personality.*

My personality is the source of the life I live. My personality is the soul of what I utter. Life and speech only give expression to personality. You will never habitually speak the truth if you aim only to speak it; you must aim to live it. You must aim at *being* the truth. Truth must be the genius of your life. The habit of speaking the truth implies the whole cast of life. It implies a genuine love of truth. It means that all the faculties of man are symmetrized around truth as a divine center. The whole world knows that back of speech is personality. The man fills his own words. Character is the latent heat in words. The man behind gives words their momentum and projectile force. Only the words of a trip-hammer man are trip-hammers. Even Homer, the poet of the past, sets forth this fact upon which we are dwelling, viz., *the man is back of his words*. In his Iliad he makes a man named Thersites deliver a speech against Agamemnon. The speech in ink is magnificent. It is among the finest things in the Iliad. But it had no effect upon the troops. Its only effect was to bring down the staff of Ulysses upon the shoulders of the speaker. What was the source of weakness? *The personality of Thersites*. Pope says that if Ulysses had made

that speech, the troops would have sailed for Greece that very night. In engineering it is a rule that a cannon should be at least one hundred times heavier than its shot. A man's character should be a hundred times heavier than what he says. Personality both originates our words and gives them their force.

Our inner life molds our language, and is molded by it in turn. What, then, is our inner life? In the exigencies of our personal and social life we cannot always pause to weigh our words. For the most part with us it is, "*Stand and deliver.*" There is, then, for us no resource but to make ourselves whole; to see to it that our lives are of such substance that, whatever we may say or do, it shall be dominated by and shall express the sum of what we are. We can trust a true personality, a full-orbed self, but we can trust nothing else. When a man has harmonized all his faculties with one another, when he has learned to love what God loves, and hate what God hates, then he is like some of those majestic representations of full-orbed human nature which Michael Angelo has given us, or which have come to us from the ancients. A friend of mine wrote from Paris, just after he had seen some of these masterpieces: "I stood in the basement of the Louvre the other day, and there was the Venus de Milo, and there, too, was the Sleeping Greek Slave in the market-place, the marble creation of the artist. The man was

majestic in quantity and quality of being. He had in him the possibility of power unfathomable, and yet he was tender as any drop of dew. A lion was in him, a dove also. Not only was his massiveness overpowering when you took a full view of it, but his tenderness was equally overpowering. It is easy to find a man large enough, but it is not easy to find a man of fine quality and of great size combined. The Venus, with its womanly purity and ideality, was as grand as the Greek Slave. I asked a young man, somewhat tempted by Parisian life, who was looking at these works of art: 'If these people were turned out to wander around the world, would they come back dissipated?' His answer was, 'They would come back without the smell of fire upon them.' 'How do you know?' He replied, 'Look at them! They are too great to be tempted.' 'But,' said I, 'they are to go round the world; they are to be free from family police; they are to be subjected to all the temptation of modern luxury.' 'They would come back with not a single hair of their head singed.' 'How do you know?' 'Look at them! they are too great to stoop.' They had in them a full-orbed human nature; and that young man, no philosopher, simply a person of good practical instinct, felt that nothing can make a man who has all the wheels moving in him act against conscience and reason. The whole make-up of such a man is against this." Yes, yes. A personality that is

true in every fiber of its being, full-orbed, married to the truth in all its instincts, loving honesty and hating duplicity—that is what we need, and that is what we must seek first and last, if we mean to be habitually genuine in life and straightforward in speech. But how are we to reach such a personality? We can reach it only by coming into contact with the living Christ, and by keeping in contact with the living Christ. We must let Him mold us after His pattern. We must let Him interpret law for us. We must let Him teach us what is right and what is wrong. We must take Him who spake as man never spake, to be our teacher and our exemplar. We need Christ, His ethics, His Spirit, His personality.

V.

JOSEPH'S WAGONS; OR, FAITH'S SYMBOLS.



## V.

### JOSEPH'S WAGONS; OR, FAITH'S SYMBOLS.

*"And when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived; and Israel said, It is enough."*—GENESIS 45: 27, 28.

WE strike the story of the patriarch Jacob at the point of supreme interest. His old age was a grand climax. It is this grand climax which we now strike. There is no reason why a man's old age should not be grand. Trust in God and faithfulness in His service are open to all, and these make a grand old age. Gather the grand things which God crowds into old age as these are exhibited by the Book! Mark the light which overflows and irradiates the experiences of His people in the evening-time of their life! Some of the sublimest pictures in the Bible are the pictures of the old age of God's heroes. They stand without a parallel. Look at some of these. Caleb, his white locks floating in the breeze as he leads the battle against the giants, and conquers the forces which forty years ago threw unbelieving Israel into

a disastrous panic. Joseph, at the age of one hundred and twenty, the leader of faith among his brethren, describing the exodus and the coming nationality, and in the full assurance of faith making request that his coffin should guide the march to the Promised Land. The march was as yet centuries in the future, but centuries were no obstacles to his faith. Simeon, feeble and tottering, yet present in the Temple, holding the infant Jesus in his arms, and in the triumph of a faith which had waited long, uttering his *nunc dimittis*, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." John, the disciple of love, an old man, receiving the Apocalypse from God, and looking into the splendors of the New Jerusalem, and writing his grand book which still thrills the world. Paul, the aged, fronting eternity, and reflecting in his face the glories of the coming Christ, and lifting his confident hand to receive the crown, and uttering these words in which there is no shadow of doubt: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." These are some of the Bible pictures of the old age of God's heroes. As pictures from human history they are unsurpassed and unsurpassable.

Among these pictures we must hang the picture of the patriarch, Jacob. His trials of life are now

over, and from this point on all is joy and peace. In his joy we forget his former griefs and sorrows. His life might be likened to one of the natural days through which we pass. The day opens with an overcast sky. Great storm-clouds blot out of view the rising sun. As the day deepens toward noon, these pour forth their tempestuous contents. But when the evening comes, they are rent asunder and broken in pieces, in order that there may be a glorious sunset. They even lend their vapory wreaths to clothe the evening with gorgeous apparel. They transmute the bright sunlight into beautiful colors. In the rapture of such an evening we forget the lowering of the morning and the thunderstorm of midday. His life might be likened to a climb up the mountain. There is a weariness in the climb. It is a struggle to force one's way through the brush. Courage and venture are tested in scaling the steeps and in making the narrow ledges. We reach the summit through exhaustion and soreness, but then there is the grand and sudden burst of sublime view, and the arduousness of the climb is completely forgotten. The 104th Psalm, which stirs us to praise as we read it in the cold type of the printed page, is before us in life-form, hymning itself up to heaven. Chained by its rapture, we catch ourselves instinctively taking up its opening words and crying, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou

made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches." When we come into the evening of Jacob's life, such is the golden twilight, such the bright vision and outlook from the mountain of his old age, that we forget the past altogether in our occupancy with the delights of the present.

The one story which we especially take from the biography of Jacob's grand old age to-day is the story of The Wagons, which the long-lost Joseph sent from Egypt to Canaan to carry his father from the land of famine to the land of plenty.

Let us put the story before us. It opens with the aged Jacob sitting at the tent-door anxiously looking Egyptward. These sad words are still in his heart: "Joseph is not, Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me." All the boys of the family are down in Egypt, for they have taken Benjamin away. The patriarch is alone. He sits at the tent-door awaiting the return of his sons. He is praying for their safety, and especially for the safety of Benjamin, Rachel's boy. In the dim distance he catches sight of a cloud of dust which rises in the air. This brings him at once to his feet, that he may peer through the distance. His heart says, "There are my sons, and God be praised." But it immediately asks, "Are they all there?" As he talks with himself, the company comes within full sight, so that he can discern their personal outlines. Then he begins to count, "One, two, three, four,

five, six, seven, eight, nine. Nine? Are there only nine? Ah, then, my dark foreboding has become a reality. Mischief has befallen Benjamin by the way. I should never have allowed him to go." These words no sooner fall from his lips than he sees the form of a tenth person, and his soul cries, "Benjamin is safe, God be doubly praised." Not only does a tenth man come into sight, but an eleventh man comes into sight. And he cries, "They are ALL there! Simeon has been set free! They are ALL there! Blessed be God, who hath not turned my prayer from Him, nor His mercy from me." What a heart-relief for Jacob! It is the sun flashing through the black cloud which he saw above his head, and from which he expected only the deadly storm.

But wait! Jacob sees, beyond his sons, another cloud of dust rising in the air, and it betokens the approach of another company. What can that be? Presently he sees, to his consternation, that it is a company of Egyptians riding in Egyptian chariots. Is it a pursuit? Does it mean that the might of Egypt is hurled against his little home? Is the return of his sons to end, not in joy, but in further and worse sorrow? Who can tell the anxious questions that filled the heart of the patriarch from the time he discerned the Egyptian wagons until his sons reached him and explained all?

Mark the meeting between the sons and the father. See the troubled face of Jacob as it throws

a whole volume of questions at his sons, even before his lips have time to frame the one question of all questions, "What does this mean? Tell me the worst at once." Mark the faces of his sons, which present a striking contrast to the face of the inquiring father. Benjamin's is all smiles and joy. Reuben's is the picture of contentment and peace; and the faces of the others are full of hidden things to be revealed.

The first thing that gave Jacob relief was the happy faces of his returning sons. His sons were different men from what they were when they returned from Egypt the first time. Scarce had he gotten relief from a look into their happy faces, when he was subjected to a shock of joy, as his sons simultaneously told him the whole story of their glad faces in this one sentence: "Joseph is yet alive, and is governor over all the land of Egypt." Do you want a picture of sudden surprise? You have it here. Do you want to see a human heart leap from fear and grief into happy assurance and joy? You can see it here. Do you want to see how the soul can paint for itself a dark present and a black future, while the real facts warrant a picture as bright as the sun? You can see that here. The absence of Joseph and Simeon and Benjamin, which was so lamented by Jacob, was working out a magnificent destiny for the household of Jacob. We can believe the narrative when it tells us that the sudden declaration of the

sons of Jacob caused their father's heart to faint, for he believed them not. "Joseph is yet alive!" The very joy wrapped up in the assertion is so great that it hinders faith. "Governor over all the land of Egypt." Methinks I hear Jacob talk with himself and say, "If he were alive, by what means could my shepherd boy rise to the highest seat of government in that great land? Ah, these, my sons, are too cruel in their treatment of me. They have entered into another wicked plot. If Joseph were alive, he would be here himself." It was natural for Jacob to be incredulous at first, and to hold on to his incredulity until he received some evidence from Joseph himself. Remember what he had to argue down before he could believe. He felt that he had irresistible presumptive evidence that Joseph had been torn to pieces by wild beasts. He had to argue that down. He had in his possession the blood-stained coat, and he brought it out and held it up before his sons. He had to contradict the coat and charge it with black falsehood. He had to turn back the whole tide and current of his feelings from that dismal day when he accepted the account of Joseph's death as a fact. He had to give up the rest of acquiescence for the restlessness of a revived hope. He had to unsettle everything.

The incredulity of Jacob did not strike his sons as strange. They accepted it as a matter of course, and began to persuade him. They told

him all that they had seen, and all that Joseph had said. They gave him every confirming detail. They pointed to the changes of the costly raiment, and the full provision, and to the many rich gifts. They made these material things talk and bear testimony. They took him out to look at *the wagons* with their Egyptian drivers, and told him their purpose, and read to him the invitation of Joseph embodied in them. That was a master-stroke; for when he saw *the wagons* his heart revived, his doubts vanished, and his faith leaped into full growth. *The wagons were symbols to his faith*, and spake to him as nothing else could speak. When he heard the story which the wagons told, he believed all that his sons declared.

But why should these sons be believed because of the wagons? Jacob once believed them when they made Joseph's coat speak; what assurance was there that they had put the voice of truth into the wagons? There was a vast difference between the coat and the wagons. They could control the coat, but they could not control the wagons. These belonged to royalty, and only some one in the royal palace, some one connected with the throne of Egypt, could send them. But who in all the world, outside of these eleven sons, would have enough interest in this lame old shepherd to send for him, and to bestow such royal gifts upon him, except one, and that one Joseph? Joseph's love was in the wagons, and the wagons as his

chosen symbols of communication with Jacob spake to the father's heart. Their message brought a glow of joy into his faded cheek, and infused a new elasticity into every limb, and breathed vigor and vitality into all his powers. Old and weary as he was, he at once determined to go and see his son. His new faith gave him a new life. By using the wagons he saw Joseph wearing the crown of an unsullied manhood as well as the ring of royal favor, and the gray hairs which he said would be brought with sorrow to the grave fell in joy upon the neck of the one for whom he had mourned until grief had whitened them.

As we look at the effect which the glad message, "Joseph is yet alive," had upon Jacob, we see the wisdom of Joseph in the way he dealt with his father. One would naturally say, "Now that Joseph knows everything, why not go himself, and see his father, and bring him to Egypt?"

If the simple words, "Joseph is yet alive," caused such a shock, and set the tide of life rolling backward upon his heart until he swooned, what think ye would have been the shock had Joseph stepped unexpectedly into his father's presence? Do you not know that joy has the power to kill, just as grief has? The daily press a few years ago told this story: A young man left his fatherland and sailed from Germany to America. He left behind him the betrothed of his heart, with the promise that he would send for her as soon as his

gains warranted. Manfully he wrought his way up the hill of fortune, and faithfully he kept his promise. His affianced landed safely in New York, and sent a telegram to Chicago announcing the time the train which bore her was due. The engine came thundering into the Union Station, and the two met, and spake each other's name, "Frederick," "Catherine." It was a lover's meeting, full of romance from real life. It was a moment of grateful joy. The greeting given, the affianced husband gently sought to disengage himself from the clasped hands which were around his broad and manly shoulders. But as he did so, he found his betrothed, in his arms, dead. She died from very joy. The method which Joseph adopted was such as would prevent the shock of joy being too great. The glad tidings were gradually given, and the meeting of great joy was gradually brought about.

As we read how the wagons of Joseph wrought conviction in Jacob, and gave him strong, active, vigorous faith, we see the value of those things which may be called outward evidences. We see the value of *faith's symbols*. The wagons were outward evidences; they were a separate and distinct testimony to the reality of what the sons of Jacob declared. They confirmed the words of these sons. They were outside arguments proving the things which the sons asked their father to believe. Has God given us outside arguments,

outside evidences? Yes, we have outside evidences to Christianity and to the doctrines of the gospel which we are asked to believe. Let us value these. Do you ask me to illustrate? I will try.

For example, we are asked to believe in the exercise of God's fatherly care over us. Well, we accept of this doctrine because of what God is in Himself, and because of what He has. He is the author of fatherhood, therefore He has a father's heart. While we accept of this doctrine of God's fatherly care over us because of what God is and has, is there not an external argument proving His care over us—an argument which all can see? There is. He sends wagons to us and gives us gifts. The sun rolling in its orbit is His wagon, and out from this wagon there is tossed upon earth golden grain for bread, brilliant flowers for beauty, and all manner of luscious fruit for luxury. God's chariot of fire, which rides the sky, is laden with gifts for all men, and these gifts which keep the earth from famine ought to speak to the human race of His love, just as Joseph's laden wagons spake to Jacob. Living in the midst of these gifts, we ought to be able to believe in the fatherhood of God; and believing the fatherhood of God in the midst of these gifts, we ought not to be able to doubt His fatherhood while in the midst of other things.

For example, we are asked to believe in the

Christian religion. We accept the Christian religion because of what it is in itself. It is full of purity and love and heavenlikeness. While we accept of it for what it is in itself, still, are there not external evidences? Yes. I find external evidences. The Christian Church is an external evidence, bearing testimony to Christianity. So is the Lord's day, and so is the Lord's Supper. Here are institutions before our eyes; they are undeniable things, and they challenge an explanation. Whence came they? Where did they originate? What do they mean? What is their purpose? To what do they testify? Answer these questions truthfully; explain these institutions as you explain other institutions, and you will receive from them the confirmation of the Christian religion. They bear the same testimony to the Christian religion that the Day of Independence bears to the American Republic; and they are just as worthy of credence. They all center in Christ, and proclaim the gospel of Christ. They are the three great external evidences of our religion. They are God's wagons bringing men the blessings of sweet rest, holy service, divine fellowship, transforming communion, ennobling scenes, and heart-melting memorials. As wagons freighted with rich spiritual gifts, they are auxiliaries to faith, arguing with corroborating and convincing power to all who will listen to them.

Let us, during this sacramental hour, confine

our thoughts altogether to one of these great auxiliaries of faith. Let us speak solely of the Lord's Supper. As we do so, let us make *the wagons of Joseph* suggest the thoughts that should be uppermost in our souls during this holy convocation. In the sacramental plate and cup of the Lord's Supper our faith has that which Jacob's faith had in the wagons from Egypt. Joseph's wagons were symbols to Jacob's faith; the bread and the wine in the gospel feast are symbols to our faith. They are God's sacramental wagons that have come rolling down the centuries, bearing precious gifts and precious messages from God to us.

Let us learn from Joseph's wagons how to interpret God's wagons, that our faith may be strengthened and our spirits revived. It is the renewal and edification of our faith which we seek in God's house and in the banqueting-chamber of His love. The cry of our soul is, "Lord, we believe; help Thou our unbelief."

There is a twofold way of looking at faith's symbols: they can be looked at as the voice of God speaking to the soul of man, or they can be looked at as the voice of the soul speaking to God. We propose at this time to look at them solely as the voice of God.

I feel impelled to say, at this point, that if we are to be benefited to-day by the symbolism of the Lord's Supper, we must recognize the bread and the wine as symbols: they are not common bread

and wine. They are sacramental bread and wine. Let us grasp this fact, and then let us read them as Jacob read the wagons from Egypt. The wagons were nothing in themselves; it was their association that gave them power. It is the association of the bread and wine with Christ that gives them power as auxiliaries of faith. We must remember this, else the sacramental plate and cup will be empty wagons to our souls. Let us not treat the Lord's Supper of the New Testament as some treat the symbolic altar of sacrifice of the Old Testament. The gospel of the coming Christ is fully written in the Old Testament altar, but they deface the writing and make the altar a spiritual blank. They make an empty enigma of it, and rob themselves of the testimony of the past. They hold it up to the contempt of an unbelieving world. One of the aged Simeons of the Christian Church writes these grand words with reference to the Old Testament symbolism: "A German astronomer, not long ago, called my attention to the magnificent distances and the sublime evolutions of the heavenly bodies. Said he, 'Up there in the December skies I can see something that seems to me worthy of an Almighty God. But when I come back from the stars to your Old Testament story about fire coming down from the sky to burn up the fragments of a slaughtered lamb, it seems very petty in contrast. I cannot

help asking myself, What can the God of the sideral universe have to do with that?' True; it is very petty till we discover in the bleeding lamb upon the altars of Judea the symbol of the Lamb of God that was slain from the foundation of the world. It is beneath the notice of the God of the stars, until we discern in the blood of the sacrifice a type of the blood which was foreordained for the remission of sin before one star glistened in the diadem of night. Take Christ out of the Old Testament, and the student of astronomy may well scorn and scout the whole story. But put Christ back again, and the pages of the Old Testament glow with a magnificence which the Heaven of heavens cannot contain."

To convert material things into symbols and memorials of great historical facts and of eternal spiritual verities is to give material things a glorious transfiguration. It is like turning the block of marble into a statue through which genius speaks. Build the rough bowlders from the Jordan-bed into a monumental pillar, and you make each stone an historical voice proclaiming the wonders of God. Make the bread and wine symbols of the broken body and shed blood of the Christ who died on Calvary, and you make the common things of life proclaim the foundation fact of the glorious gospel—this fact, viz., "Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God to all

who believe." You turn also a common feast into a banquet with God, and you bring to earth the fellowship of heaven.

The sacramental plate and cup, like Joseph's wagons, are symbols of faith. That is our point now. They speak to us as the wagons spake to Jacob.

1. *The wagons declare to Jacob that there is somebody in Egypt who knows him and is thinking of him. The sacramental cup and plate declare to us that there is somebody in heaven who knows us and is thinking of us.*

The wagons were expressly for Jacob. Joseph could not have spoken more distinctly or recognizably to Jacob if he had spoken to him through the telephone of the nineteenth century. The wagons annihilated distance. In them Joseph thought aloud and audibly, and his father heard his thoughts. As he listened to the story of the wagons his heart said to him, "I am known in Egypt; there is one exalted mind there who is thinking of me. He individualizes me."

Are not these the very thoughts which communicants have as they receive the sacramental elements? "This is My body broken for you!" What are these words but a personal address—the individualizing of each disciple upon the part of the Master of the Feast? What are these words but the recognition of the personality of each? It is the voice of a greater than Joseph calling us by

name and saying, "Jacob," "John," "Mary," "Elizabeth, the blessings of redemption are for you." Our names, written on precious gems, are on the breastplate and shoulders of our great High-Priest before the throne of God. Christ knows the name of Ananias, with whom Paul lodges, and the city in which Ananias lives, and the street upon which Ananias lives, and the house in which Ananias lives. Child of God, whoever you are, you are known in heaven, and in the sacrament of the Church God sends you a personal address, a personal assurance of pardon, and a personal Christ.

*2. The wagons declare to Jacob that there is somebody in Egypt who is planning for his comfort and making rich provision for him. The sacramental cup and plate declare to us that there is somebody in heaven planning for our comfort and making a rich provision for us.*

Joseph's wagons and gifts were only earnest of the future, and as such they gave Jacob satisfaction and confidence. The wagons were prophecies and promises. Because of them Jacob knew that Goshen, the choicest valley in Egypt, was sure.

Is not the Lord's Supper an earnest to us? It is a witness of the love which Christ had for us, and which led Him to the cross on our behalf. But is it not an earnest, a picture, of that marriage supper of the Lamb of which it is written, "Blessed are they who are bidden to the marriage supper

of the Lamb"? To the man of discerning faith, the Lord's Supper is nothing short of the communion in heaven in the form of a prophecy. Our desires for greater fullness and greater degrees of divine fellowship are pledges and prophecies of coming satisfaction, just as the eye is the pledge and prophecy of the needed light and of the world of beauty; just as one joint in the physical man is a prophecy of another and complementary joint. God makes no half-joints. Here we have foretastes of that which is beyond, and, like the Eshcol clusters, these foretastes speak to us of the full vintage in the Promised Land. It is said that voyagers to beautiful isles in warmer climes scent the aroma of their flowers while they are twenty and thirty miles off at sea. Even so, it seems that God permits His people, while afar off from heaven, to have large foretastes of the glory to be revealed, as their faith sails the sea of life in the ship of Church ordinances, whose prow is headed toward the port of Jerusalem above.

Overlook not the provision which God has made for His people. He has wagons for every spiritual Jacob. No Jacob need go through life footsore and weary. Every Jacob who walks and plods until he is exhausted does so because he persistently refuses to ride. The wagons of God are running along every highway over which God calls us to travel. These are the golden-wheeled chariots of the promises. They run hither and thither

all through human life. Does God call you to run along the pathway of orphanage? There is a golden-wheeled chariot running that way, "I will be a father unto the fatherless." Does God call you to run along the way of widowhood? There is a golden-wheeled chariot running that way, "I will be the husband of the widow." Does God call you to travel the *via dolorosa*? There is a golden-wheeled chariot running that way, "I will be with you in six troubles, and in seven troubles I will deliver thee." Does your faith require you to run back to the beginnings of Christianity, that you may assure yourselves of the first principles? There is a chariot which turns straight back to these first-needed things—it is the Lord's Supper. Use this chariot. The wagons of God run all through human life. More than this, the wagons of God constantly run between earth and heaven. The promises are the wagons that run through human life, on every line of experience; and the ordinances of the Church, the songs of the soul, and the earnest, believing prayers of the heart are the wagons that run between heaven and earth.

3. *The wagons declare to Jacob that there is somebody in Egypt who loves him and who cannot be satisfied without his presence. The sacramental plate and cup declare to us that there is some one in heaven who loves us, and who cannot be satisfied without our presence.*

Joseph had the palace, and the run of the king-

dom, and a home of his own; but there was a place in his life which only his father could fill. It is true that his father was a poor man, but the nobility in the soul of Joseph scorned the idea of making any difference in the treatment of his father on account of that. There are degenerated sons in the nineteenth century who look upon their poor parents as in the way; who are inordinately resigned to Providence when they die, and who carry their principles of economy so far as to economize on their coffins; but Joseph's soul was not built out of such spiritual rubbish. With him it was not "Over the Hills to the Poorhouse," but it was "Over the Hills to the Palace." His loving heart must have Jacob in Egypt; and with Jacob in Egypt, Egypt becomes a new land to him. It was a grand day when the wagons brought the old patriarch to Egypt, and when the long-separated ones met, pronounced each other's name, looked each other in the face, and settled down for a long life of communion. Ere Jacob started to Egypt the wagons told him of all these joys.

What do the sacramental elements tell us? Do they not speak of the love and longing of God, in Jesus Christ, as these go out toward His people? The Christ who could not go to the Transfiguration Mount alone; the Christ who could not go to Gethsemane without taking with Him His chosen disciples; even this same Christ cannot do without

human company in heaven. Did He not pray to His Father in the intercessory prayer, "I will that they whom Thou hast given may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory"? He cannot even wait for us to reach heaven; so He sends us the wagon of His covenant in the form of the Great Supper, that our thoughts and faith and love may ascend to Him now, and may be His now. It is a great thought, and it is full of comfort. The heavenly glory of Christ will not be perfect, and the heavenly joy of Christ will not be full, and the heavenly love of Christ will not be satisfied, and the heavenly company of Christ will not be complete until the last of His redeemed ones is safely gathered on high. Every wagon in, and every saved soul brought home—that is necessary for the perfection of heaven, and for the satisfaction of God's infinite love. The family of God, all together with God, in the mansion of God—that is the reality of which this sacramental feast is the type and picture.

"One family, we dwell in Him,  
One Church above, beneath,  
Though now divided by the stream,  
The narrow stream of death.

"One army of the living God,  
To His command we bow;  
Part of the host have crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now."

Brethren, we are in a holy presence to-day. We are face to face with holy things. Our faith ought to be vitalized, deepened, and broadened through the communicated life of our Christ, which He sends us through faith's symbols. God's spiritual wagons are here, laden with spiritual gifts. They are weighted down with holy messages, with a radiant gospel, with a pictorial cross, with promises that are all gold, with portions from the King's heavenly table. What is more than all, they bring the King Himself. Now that He has come, He will preside at our feast, give us a welcome, and strengthen us every one for life. We know not what is before us, but He knows, and He will impart to us according to that knowledge. To-day we shall receive from Him according to our faith and our desire and our spiritual relish.

May the Lord grant that our spirits may be revived, and that our hearts may be filled with new impulses and new enterprises. May we go from this communion Sabbath as Moses went from the cleft of the rock where God hid him, with the vision of God burning in our souls, and with an abiding sense of God's presence. May we go from it as Elijah went from Horeb, carrying with us a fresh faith, and an inward feeling of our sufficiency in God. May we go from it as John went from Patmos, with our minds filled with pictures of the future, and of the glories which God has provided for His Church and His people, and, like

John, may we ever be able to keep these glowing before the eyes of the universe. May we be so filled to-day with God's own Spirit that we shall be able to use the words of Jacob and say, "*It is enough.*" "*It is enough.*"



VI.

“THE INDIGNATION OF A FINE SOUL.”



## VI.

### “THE INDIGNATION OF A FINE SOUL.”

*“And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.”—*  
LUKE 12: 19.

THE parable which gives us our text was called out by an interruption. It is not one of the logical links in Christ's sermon; it is an interpolation. Jesus was discoursing upon the trials of life, and upon the providences which overrule them; upon the persecutions of the righteous, and upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which sustains the righteous in the midst of persecutions. Just when He reached this solemn part of His sermon one of His hearers, who was thinking of gold and lands and material possessions, broke in upon Him with a matter wholly irrelevant: “Master, bid my brother divide my father's estate with me.” So incongruous, so foreign, so sudden was the interruption that the sermon was literally shattered. You are shocked at the frivolity and carnality of the man. You are sorry for the broken sermon. But why be shocked? Why be sorry? Hundreds

of modern sermons would be shattered if modern hearers acted themselves out as this man acted himself out. If by a spiritual photography the thoughts of our congregations could be brought out as plainly as the features of our auditors, it would be found that men's brains in the pews were often teeming with incongruous thoughts.

We people of the nineteenth century are not so intensely sabbatic that we can pose as critics of the secularity of the people of the first century. The man who interrupted Jesus is duplicated in Brooklyn. Last Sabbath Mr. A met Mr. B, and because it was Sabbath he began his conversation by inquiring for the state of his soul. When Mr. B had answered solemnly and religiously, then both men forgot all about their souls and glided with perfect ease into a discussion of the late election and its probable influence upon business. They had election on the brain, precisely as this man had his father's will on the brain. Human nature is human nature.

While Christ's sermon was broken in twain, yet the occasion was not lost. The Master used the interruption as an opportunity for speaking this noted parable, which exposes the fatal folly of allowing material things to have the supreme place in human life. We owe some of the finest parables of our Lord to the narrowness and the folly and the sins of men. The bigotry of the Pharisees called out the parables of "The Lost Piece of

Money," "The Lost Sheep," and "The Lost Son." And here the grasping character of this unnamed man calls out the parable of the rich fool.

We do not like the man of the parable, as we see him rub his fat hands, and hear him chuckle with delight over his harvests, and dialogue with himself complacently, and make the plans of a practical atheist. We do not like the man. But let us not hold up our hands in mock horror as though the man of the parable were a caricature upon our nature, for he is not. Christ was not guilty of making a coarse daub when He painted this man. The man of the parable is a character true to life. Instead of giving way to mock horror, let us give ourselves to prayer that God may save us from translating the parable into history. Better be anything in the world than this rich fool. I do not wonder at the burning words of one of England's greatest preachers, in speaking to his congregation upon this parable, in which he congratulates the believing poor man in his audience who has a rich faith in God. His words are these: "Do I speak to any poor person here? My brother, listen. When that cold east wind flutters your rags, when it bites you to the very marrow, thank God for your coldness, and for your emptiness, for these things have saved you from the black atheism of this rich fool. Poverty is a bitter thing on a cold winter day; but poverty with salvation is infinitely better than houses and barns

filled to bursting and a palace crowded with every possible luxury without salvation." The words of the minister which I have quoted are hot, but they are not too hot. They scintillate with truth, but not with exaggeration.

The words of the parable at which we anchor our thoughts are the words which the man addresses to his soul after he has built his new barns and stowed away his harvests, and after he has walked in pride amid his abundance and superabundance: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." This is what the man says to the soul. The question with me is, What did the soul say to the man? The soul has its own thoughts. The soul has its own rights. The soul has its own ideals. I am interested in the soul's reception of the proposition. How did it feel and act? How ought it to feel and act? My fellow-man, how would you feel and act? If the soul was in touch with God, *a fine soul*, a soul conscious of its own wonderful possibilities, of its own nature, of its own needs, and of its own immortality, *it received the man's proposition with upright and downright indignation*. The proposition created an earthquake in the world called man. The true soul's indignation can be judged by God's indignation. God's indignation is expressed in the title which He gives the man of the parable, "*Thou fool*." A true soul is of kin with God, and feels as God feels, and talks

as God talks, and uses the names which God uses in denominating things and persons.

Taking for granted that this soul was a fine soul, let us draw near and listen while the man of the parable makes his proposition, and while the soul responds. The conversation between them cannot be otherwise than educational.

The man addresses the soul: Soul, I have purchased a magnificent farm, and I have been a diligent farmer. I have paid every dollar of indebtedness. I own it out and out. I have fully stocked it. On it are horses and kine and flocks, all well conditioned. I have enlarged everything on a grand scale. The barns are new, and the storehouses are ample. I have plowed and sowed and reaped, and the harvest is rich and superb. A hundredfold all around has been the increase, and the granaries contain substance for years and years. I am proud of myself, I am proud of my goods, I am proud of my houses, I am proud of my farm. Now, as I am wedded to thee, I bring all to thee; join me in a life of wholesale indulgence, and freedom from care: "Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry."

What does the soul respond? That is the question.

The soul responds: O man, thou meanest well, but thou art ignorant, thou art selfish, thou art debased and lustful, thou art sinful, thou art a fool. The more I think of thy proposition the more I

feel the flush of shame, the more humiliated I am, and the more does downright indignation burn within me. I protest against thy proposal with every faculty of my being. There is an insult in thy words, the insult of underestimation and non-appreciation. I am infinitely above barns and storehouses and things. A soul would deteriorate if it were doomed to do nothing but watch the body and munch corn, or gorge itself with luxuries and fill itself with wines. Away with the life proposed; it is an abomination unto me. If I were to accept of it I should soon find myself wedded to a man blotched and bloated and dehumanized and brutalized, with low sensuality looking out of every feature of his face and form. Thou art an embryo glutton and wine-bibber.

But note you, I do not decry the animal in man, for, to begin with, man is an animal. Whether we take the old idea of outright creation, or the scientific doctrine of evolution—man is an animal. Whether he was created outright in a second, or whether he is the out-blossoming of the topmost twig of the tree of life which is millions of years old—man is an animal. He is, however, at the top of the animal world. The lowest type of the animal crawls horizontally on the ground, or swims horizontally in the waters—man moves on a perpendicular. To say nothing of the development of the nervous system, which becomes more complex, to say nothing of the development of the

brain—there is a gradual lifting of the very physical form itself, up through reptile, bird, mammal, until at last man stands, in contradistinction to the lower forms of life, perpendicular, with his feet upon the earth and his head pointing to the far-off heavens. Add to this perpendicularity the growth and the development and the perfection of brain which is in man, and man leaves all other animals hopelessly behind. I admit that man is an animal. I admit that the animal in man should be provided for; it should be well fed and well housed and well clad. I go away beyond this, and this is the point I am pressing: I hold that the animal in man should be fed, clad, and housed for the express purpose of sustaining and keeping in health that which is highest in man, the intellectual, the moral, the spiritual. My quarrel with you, O man, is this: your position stops with the animal in man. You ignore the immortal in man. If a man's idea of what his soul wants is merely to find the soft side of the world and enjoy it, it is no wonder that he should doubt, as many such men do, whether such a soul can be immortal; for he treats it as no higher than the soul of a dog, whose heaven is a soft rug in front of a warm fire. Your sin is that you end where you end. A farm well tilled, a barn well filled, a table well spread—there is nothing sinful in desiring these. Desire for such things is the nurse of industry and thrift. But your sin is in your desire ending there, wholly

unbalanced by those higher desires which man as a son of God should cherish.

You are a fool because you take less than a man's part. You lay up treasure *for* yourself, but you lay up no treasure *in* yourself. Nobility, or rather *ability*, is your obligation. Your possibilities are and should be your necessities. We expect everything to act according to its nature. We expect the lark to soar and sing. We expect the watch-dog to be faithful according to its breed. Now we should deal with *self* on no lower standard. What does this standard mean for us? It means that we shall climb up into the ethical and the æsthetical and the intellectual and the spiritual and the worshipful. It means deep and earnest thought and reverence and aspiration. It means the possession of the truth. It means the love of all that is high and fair and pure and sweet and godlike. It means the consecration of ourselves to noble manhood and holy womanhood. It means that we shall feed on that on which God feeds. Propose that, O man, and I will lock hands with you upon the instant.

I have this also against thy proposition, O man—*there is no God in it*. From beginning to end it is atheistic. I have heard thee talk, and the leading word in thy talk has been the word "my." "My lands." "My barns." "My goods." "My corn." "My soul." No God. No homage. No worship. No gratitude. It is all "me and

mine." Thou infinite liar! thou ownest nothing. Thou unjust steward, thou dost dishonestly appropriate what belongs to another. God, whom thou willfully dost exclude, owns everything. The corn is His: it grew on His earth, was watered by His rain and ripened by His sun. The barns are His: His forests grew the timber out of which they have been built. Thou dost not even own thy life; it was given thee of God, to be returned to Him by and by beautified and transfigured by holy deeds. I belong to God, yet by excluding Him thou proposest to me that I shall prove traitor to my God. No, never! It is He who makes me what I am. It is God in my life that makes my life glorious.

My life is an insipid, a dull, an unattractive thing until God comes into it. It is like a figured window, which is only bits of colored glass till the sunshine gleams behind it. But how magnificent is the window when thus lighted; it flashes into purple and gold, and breaks forth into the splendors of precious stones. Life is beautiful when lighted with the love and the purposes and glory of God. You propose no God, and no Christ; but God and Christ are my chief and constant need. You offer me only "goods." I need pardon; I need redemption; I need purification; I need preparation for the day of judgment. Of what service would "goods" be to me before the great white throne? Thou wouldst send me out into eternity absolutely unprepared and helpless. Away from me, O fiend

of hell, and emissary of the devil! I mean to be saved. I mean to be on God's winning side here on earth, and I mean to reign with God on His throne in heaven. I can get along grandly without thy "goods," but I cannot get along at all without God. O God, come Thou and enter into my life, and fill every faculty of my being; for I open the door of every faculty to Thee. There is an inspiration that comes only from Thee, and that thrills the soul, and that lifts one up to the consciousness that one is the child of God: grant me that inspiration, that I may live by it.

Thou proposest no God, yet no man has been more dependent upon God than thou hast been, or has so come into direct contact with God. "The sons of Tubal Cain, the artificers in brass and iron—there might be some excuse for these not knowing God, there are so many second causes coming between them and the First Great Cause. The mason never saw the quarry whence were hewn the granite blocks with which he builds. The carpenter never stood under the oak or the pine and felt the presence of God there. He works upon the timber without studying that miracle of nature, a tree. But you are different. You have never been absorbed by the roar of the blast-furnace, nor by the din of whirring factory wheels. God has run the great engine and factory of nature for you. You have received His rain and sunshine directly from heaven. You have

been compelled to wait for Him, and you have seen Him day by day do what you could not do. He has actually worked His miracles before your eyes to bless you with crops and abundance." For *you* to be an atheist, and for *you* to propose atheism to me, is nothing short of monstrous iniquity.

Added to the sin of having no Fatherhood of God your proposition is guilty of having in it *no brotherhood of man*. It embraces no schemes of philanthropy. Having no God in heaven, you have no brother on earth. You say, "There is no room for my goods." There is plenty of room. There is room in the homes of the destitute and in the mouths of the hungry. These are God's granaries, and he who is in partnership with God and who recognizes God's claims will store largely in these. Turn your crops into gold, and your gold into asylums, and into orphan homes, and into institutions of learning, and into missionary stations, and into those needed redemptive agencies for which the world is crying.

I have another objection to your proposition, O man. It is this: *it would house me with the corruptible and fading*, and thus expose me also to corruption. Dwelling with the carnal, I too should become carnal. The Saviour said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves

treasures in heaven, where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is there will your heart be also." Now notice the reason by which He enforces His command. A noted thinker puts it this way: "Why not lay up treasures upon earth? Because there the moth and rust and thief come. And so we should lose those treasures. Yes; by the moth and the rust and the thief. Does our Lord, then, mean that the reason for not laying up treasures is their transitory and corruptible nature? No; He adds a 'for': 'for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.' Of course the heart will be where the treasure is, but what has that to do with the argument? This: what is with the treasure must fare as the treasure fares. The heart that haunts the treasure-house where the moth and the rust doth corrupt will be exposed to the same ravages as the treasure—will itself be rusted and moth-eaten. Ah, here is the hurt; the immortal, the soul created in the image of the everlasting God, is housed with the fading and the corrupting, and clings to them as its good, clings to them till it is infected, penetrated, and interpenetrated with their disease and foulness; creeps with them into a burrow in the earth, where its budded wings wither and damp and drop away from its shoulders, instead of haunting the open plains and the highest tablelands, spreading abroad its young pinions to the sun and the air, and strengthening them in further

and further flights, till at last they become strong enough to bear the God-born into the presence of its Father in heaven." Ah, therein lies the hurt, and this is the hurt which your proposition would bring into my experience. I deserve something better. I reject thy proposition *in toto*.

I take thy proposition, O man, to the Book of God, and when I weigh it in the divine balances, lo, *it is wanting*. The whole genius of the Book is against it. Moses warns the Hebrews against the tendency of wealth to injure the soul. Solomon says, "He that trusteth in riches shall fall." Christ declares that "the deceitfulness of riches chokes the word." He declares upon general principles that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." James teaches that "the friendship of the world is enmity against God." John says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The apostates of the first era of the Church were Judas and Demas, and they were both ruined by the love of money. In the beginning there were but two rich men that evinced any love for Jesus, and they were both cowards—Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. The rich young man of the Gospel went away from Christ. He was sorrowful in going, but he went away. My Bible gives me one example where your proposition, O man, was tried to the very extreme, and it ingloriously failed to

give the heart happiness. Solomon tried it, and it landed him in black remorse. I ask you to look at his life as I have, and see it as I see it. There are no outward reverses in it to speak of. True. As Robertson says, "His reign was the type of the reign of power and peace; no war, no national disaster interrupted the even flow of the current of his days. No loss of child, like David's, pouring cold desolation into his soul; no pestilence, no famine. That is all true. Prosperity and riches, and the internal development of the nation's life—that was the reign of Solomon. And yet with all this was Solomon happy? Has God no winged arrows in heaven for the heart except those which come in the shape of outward calamity? Is there no way that God has of making the heart gray and old before its time, without sending bereavement or loss or sickness? Has the Eternal Justice no mode of withering and drying up the inner springs of happiness while all is green and wild and fresh outwardly?" Look into the history of Solomon for the answer. Read the Book of Ecclesiastes. That book is the experience of a course such as you propose to me. It vibrates through and through from its beginning to its end with disgust with the world, and with mankind, and with life, and with self. It is full also of doubt and blindness and darkness and despair. It is full of a philosophy that perplexes and that hopelessly engulfs the soul. The Book of Ecclesiastes is the

darkest and most pitiful book ever written, and yet it is a literal transcript of the life you propose to me. Contrast Solomon with Paul and with John, and contrast the Book of Ecclesiastes with the eighth chapter of Romans, and with the Apocalypse. I mean to rewrite the eighth chapter to the Romans. I mean to rewrite the Apocalypse. God forbid that I should rewrite the Book of Ecclesiastes. "Eat, drink, and be merry" is your proposition; I tell you plainly, O man, there are as many mean and damnable lies in your proposition as there are words.

You propose to me, "*Take thine ease.*" There is no such thing as ease to a soul which proposes to itself the life I propose to myself. I propose to live a life which shall leave behind it an influence for good that can never die. This is a possible thing to do. Jesus lived such a life. After He died He lived more efficiently than when He was alive. The death of the apostles stopped nothing, but sped much. John Brown's influence at Harper's Ferry was as nothing in comparison with John Brown's influence in the armies of the North. He took Fort Donelson. He marched through Georgia. He won the battle of Gettysburg. We may criticise the man and his methods, but these are the facts of history.

I mean to climb up into the very heights of God. The soul that does that has no time or energy to waste in wearing ease. I am like the

prisoner of Chillon. Byron makes the illustrious Bonnivard dig footholds in the walls of his dungeon, by which he climbs to the lofty window of his cell to get a look at the impressive mountains of his native Switzerland. For weary years he had been confined in the prison of Chillon below the level of the waters of Lake Geneva. He could hear the waters ripple day and night. They formed, as it were, a second prison wall. One day a bird sang at the prison window the sweetest song he had ever heard. It resurrected his heart of stone. It created a yearning for a look over the land which was free to the bird. So the prisoner dug footholds in the plaster of the wall and climbed to the window above. He looked out and he saw the mountains unchanged. He saw the snow of a thousand years, and learned patience. That look put new life into him and gave him a vision that lasted him to the end. From that sight he obtained rest, strength, solace. I mean to climb up to God that I may get God's vision of life, and be forever consoled by the sight of something grand and inviting beyond this life, in which I am now as in a prison. I mean to catch a glimpse of the towering peaks of immortality. I am cutting footholds for my faith in the promises of God, and I have no time for ease, and I want no ease. The joy of such work is far better than ease. I want not rich living, I want only a rich life.

One more word with thee, O man, and that

word is this: in thy proposition thou overlookest the greatest certainty of the universe, viz., *the fact of death*. Whilst thou art talking about "much goods," the pocketless shroud is waiting for thee. And whilst thou art talking of "many years," this very night the order of God shall be "exit rich farmer," "enter greedy heirs."

Walk, O man, amid thy possessions, and forget not thy mortality. Say to thyself, "Self, I am a dying man." Say to thy storehouses, "Storehouses, I am a dying man." Say to thy barns, "Barns, I am a dying man." Say to the farm, "Farm, I am a dying man." "Thou fool, this night shall thy life be required of thee."

Such is the indignation of a fine soul when its finest susceptibilities are tempted to materialism. It is hot and pungent. It is just and right and godlike. There are some lessons which we should learn from the indignation of a fine soul. Let me present these lessons as I see them.

1. *We should seek an all-around development of our nature.*

This nature of ours reaches from nadir to zenith, but no part of it can be neglected if we are ever to reach a complete self. It will not do to rest satisfied with controlling and keeping in proper place the animal part of our nature; we must look after the mental as well. It will not do to rest satisfied with looking after the mental, we must look after the social, the moral, the spiritual also. Some err

here; they concentrate all their energies in training the mental, and stop there. This makes imperfect men. Goethe might be mentioned here. He developed his intellect, but not his social nature. He would have been a greater man if he had developed his social nature. He lived in the midst of some of the greatest social and political changes that Europe has ever seen, without speaking a word or lifting a finger to show that he cared for them. He did not even intimate that they engaged his attention. The social side of his nature was so dwarfed that he could appear to be practically indifferent to the wants and sorrows and upheavals of the world. George William Curtis published some years ago a volume entitled "Prue and I." In it is a chapter called "Mr. Titbottom's Spectacles." The magical quality of these spectacles was that, when their owner looked through them at people, he ceased to see persons as they ordinarily appeared on the street; he saw their real essential character personified. Wonderful were the revelations that were made. He looked at one man and saw nothing but a ledger. Another was simply a billiard-cue. Another a jockey cap. Another a pack of cards. He looked at women, and one was a broomstick. Another was a fashion-plate. A third was a needle, and thus on. The moral of the story is a fact that is true, viz., most people are only developed on one side

of their nature, and they are in consequence narrow, and live narrow lives. This is not what God intends. This is not what our nature deserves.

2. *Where a soul is developed we should not expect it to be satisfied with low things.*

Here, for example, is a young woman, beautiful not as an animal merely; she has something besides animal beauty. She has fine, delicate sensibilities. She has a social nature which responds to the conditions of humanity at large. She has a keen conscience, deciding right and wrong. She must do right at any cost. She must sympathize with the world's sorrows and infirmities, and give a helping hand. Forbid her this, and you cut off the highest joy and satisfaction of her life. She is a woman with an ideally perfect character before her as her goal. She has an ideal outlook. There are hosts of such young women in the Christian Church. It happens that she mates with a husband who is a splendid business man. But he is nothing else, and he cares for nothing else. He builds a beautiful home; fills it with everything—carpets, furniture, pictures, bric-à-brac—and then wonders that she is not fed. He expects her, with all her higher developments, to feed and live on bricks and marble and carpets and sofas; and he wonders that she is not satisfied. He addresses her as the man of the parable addresses his soul. He should open the door for her out into the world

of philanthropy and Christian service. That is what she needs, and only with that can she ever be made happy.

3. *If we are ever to be what we should be and live as we should live, we must make Christ, who spake the parable, our model, and get our ideals and inspirations from Him.*

A visitor going into the studio of a great painter found on his easel some very fine gems, brilliant and sparkling. Asking why he kept them there, the painter replied: "I keep them there to tone up my eyes. When I am working in pigments, insensibly the sense of color becomes weakened. By having these pure colors before me to refresh my eyes the sense of color is brought up again, just as the musician by his tuning-fork brings his strings up to the concert pitch." For right living we need clear conceptions of the Perfect One. Such conceptions only produce high moral impressions. We need to be toned up. We need the high and holy life of the perfect Man, Christ Jesus. He raises our conceptions. He re-gives us the ideals which are beginning to fade out. He tones up our spiritual eyes, so that they discern clearly and rightly and accurately.

As we abide in the house of God to-day let us seek a vision of what God would have us to be. My fellow-men, *a vision is not an impromptu affair*. It is a result. It is a growth. Now we should honestly give ourselves up to dreams and

to contemplation and to thought and to aspiration until we reach a glowing vision—a vision of the play of principle and its undeviating results; a vision of Christ and His glory, and the place which He holds in the universe; a vision of the gospel, what it is, and what it is doing in the world. Above all things, we should give ourselves up to dreams, and to contemplation, and to deep, serious thought, and to aspiration, until we reach a glowing vision of *self*—what we should be; what it is possible for us to be; what Christ has promised we shall be, if we let Him into our lives to inspire and to mold. Such a vision we should look upon as a divine gift from God. We should look upon it as a promise and as a prophecy. We should grasp it and keep it as we keep our own souls. We should ever believe in it as a possible thing, and never cease working toward it until it is completely and grandly realized in a finished Christian personality. To reach such a vision, and to gaze upon it until we incarnate it—this is to deal fairly with our soul, and to protect it from the power of every degrading thing.



VII.

HELP AND CHEER FROM THE GLORIFIED  
DEAD.



## VII.

### HELP AND CHEER FROM THE GLORIFIED DEAD.

*"Wherefore, seeing that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us."*—HEBREWS 12: 1.

THERE is no doubt about it, the simplest and most obvious interpretation of the text gives us this great fact: the Church in heaven is interested in the Church on earth—the glorified dead cheer us on to our goal.

There is great help in a cheer. A cheer is a moral power. It adds the life of those who cheer us to our life, and it inspires us with their courage and their feelings and their aims. It awakens our latent energies, and fills us with hope. By means of it we are born into our higher self. It carries us to success.

You have, perhaps, seen this incident related in the daily press; it is apropos as an illustration. A New York fireman was at the top of a ladder striving to gain an entrance through the window into a burning tenement. There was a sleeping

babe within. The dense, curling smoke, in which was a fierce bright-red jet of flame, dashed in his face and baffled him; once, twice, thrice, he made an attempt to enter, and finally gave up and turned to come down. The babe was abandoned to its fate. The on-looking crowd below was horror-stricken. At this juncture of affairs, one man in the crowd, as if moved by an inspiration from God, cried, "Let us give him a cheer!" The proposal found the response of an intuition in the hearts of the vast crowd, and in a second every voice rent the air. To the fireman the voice of the people was the voice of God. Under the inspiration of their cheer he ran up the ladder and dashed through the window, and then appeared again with the rescued child in his arms. Under the power of a cheer he accomplished what would otherwise have been impossible. When he came down to the foot of the ladder and presented the child to its mother, New York never heard a heartier plaudit than that which the crowd gave the hero of the hour. What was in that cheer? In it was the picture of the babe in danger; in it was the horror of the crowd; in it was the expression of human hope. It carried to the soul of the fireman the feelings and the wishes and the sympathies and the daring of the multitudes. In it the strength of the on-looking crowd took possession of the man, and made him a hero. It was the strength of the crowd that dashed into the fire-

filled room, and that dashed out again with the saved life.

There is great help in a cheer. It brings into the soul of man the added life of others. This increased power, this added life of others, we all need, if we are to reach with honor the goal of a grand earthly career. This will be apparent to any one who grasps fully what the goal of life is.

What is the goal of life? Perfect manhood in Christ Jesus—that is the goal of our life. Our best possible self reached—that is our goal. A life in earnest—that is our goal. Are we not told by the text to make our life a life in earnest? Life is to be a race. What do we see in a race? Muscles strained; veins like whip-cords; beaded perspiration; strenuous, intense, earnest speed. The reality in the mental and spiritual man corresponding to these symbols in the physical man—that is our goal. The figure of the Olympian Agonistæ means a life in earnest or it means nothing. Useful service in life, or duty well done—that is our goal. Temptation met and resisted and conquered—that is our goal. Power to love, to be just, to be pure, to be true, to control external life and internal life—that is our goal. Honest success in the avocation of life which we follow—that is our goal. The success of the Christian lawyer, of the Christian business man, of the Christian artificer, of the Christian scholar, is just

so much power added to the personality which he consecrates to the cause of God and to the uplifting of humanity in the world. We should therefore look upon success in our daily avocation as a duty which we owe God and man. We should push our business, and our study, and our practice, and our manual toil until they have become a success. To reach success in every case will take hard work; but to do hard and healthful work is the purpose of God in bringing us into the world. Hard work has always been the condition of success in all the departments of life. No man ever became a Bunsen or a Helmholtz in the laboratory apart from endless experimenting with chemicals. No man or woman ever went up the way of the violin, or the way of the piano, or the way of the organ, or the way of the orchestra, except by labor. The Beethovens, the Mendelssohns, the Mozarts, the Haydns, and the Handels, who cheer human life with their sweetness of music, were all incarnated energy and ambition and push.

We cannot too often set before man a high standard or urge upon him the necessity of effort. Every one has his *quantum* of duty in this world. Every one has his responsibilities to meet, and his lot to fill, and his character to build and maintain; and only constant effort can make him successful in his trusts. A man may have desire, and he needs desire; but desire enervates if it be not backed by effort. A man may have hope, and

he needs hope; but hope will always meet with defeat, if it remain inert and be nothing more than a mere expectation of good luck. A man may have aspiration, and he needs aspiration; but aspiration will prove volatile and will evaporate if it be not married to work. There is no substitute for effort if a man would be successful. But success, *success* in all of the honorable avocations of life—that is our goal. The protection of self against all deterioration—that is our goal. We must conserve and keep all the advances we make. Our life must be a perpetual going forward. If we lose that which we have attained, our ending in the race of life will be worse than our starting. There is no sight in life so pitiable as that of a man who is carried backward by deterioration, and who has lost all ambition to resist deterioration. An old man, who began enthusiastically with high, moral sentiments and purposes, whom life has hewn, and cut down, and diminished, and soured, and made censorious, and deprived of all impulse for virtue and for disinterestedness—an old man who began with all the best sentiments of youth bright and glowing, but who has allowed himself to be vulgarized, who stands in his old age indifferent morally, and who allows himself, with open eyes, to gravitate down and down—there is not, under God's heaven, another sight more pitiable than such an old man. If there is a sight more pitiable, it is the sight of a young man without impulse in

the spring of his life; with no freshness, with no spontaneity, with no aspiration, with no romance, with no outburst, with no generosity. A young man should be full of fiery passion and impetuosity and ambition and tendencies that are almost irresistible; but he should see to it that these are kept on the right track. These things on the right track are our protection against deterioration, and our assurance of a progress that will ultimately bring us to the goal of life.

Such is the goal of our life toward which we should press. I have not put it too high, I have not made it too great. The point before us now is this: that to reach the goal of our life we need help and cheer. We need something to counteract the things which are against us. What are the things which are against us? Our own indisposition to hard work is against us; our timidity by nature is against us. We are full of self-distrust, and this is against us. Our sensitiveness to the criticism of others is against us; the power of our temptations is against us; the vastness of our tasks is against us; the disability which is ours by heredity is against us. With some men the hands of twenty ancestors are let down to lift them up to success, but these men are few; with the majority of men the contrary is the case: the hands of twenty ancestors with fiery fingers are pulling them down while they are trying to lift themselves up. All of these things make us hesitate

and fill us with fear, and our hesitation and fear weaken us. Our failure in past efforts is against us. Our underestimation by others is against us; they put us into withering contrast with the great, and make us feel our littleness.

I knew a man once who had the good fortune to hear Rubinstein when he was in America; but his privilege made a cynic out of him. He always took occasion to remark, when any one played upon the piano before him, "I heard Rubinstein when he was here; I really have never heard any piano-music worth listening to since." It would take a powerful cheer to counteract such a disheartening contrast. When I started as a young man in the ministry, among the first things that happened after my installation was a call from an old man of the congregation, who greeted me in this way: "David, I called around to say that you will have to preach tip-top sermons if you mean to succeed in suiting me; for I have been used to hearing such men as Thomas Chalmers and Thomas Guthrie and Dr. Candlish and Robert Murray MacCheyne and Dr. William Arnot. I am high up in my preaching tastes." I was downcast for a month after that. The only cheer that lifted me up again was the translation of that good father to the land where Chalmers and Guthrie and Candlish and MacCheyne and Payson still carry on their ministry. While here on earth, the good father was a hindrance to me; but the moment his face

looked down upon me from the glory-cloud, he became a help.

Because of the obstacles which meet us in our way as we push on toward the goal of life, we are in constant need of help and cheer; this need God sees, and for this need God provides. He brings our fellow-men into our lives, and makes them powerful factors for inspiration; He brings into our lives the glorified dead, and makes them cheer us on. There are a host of other factors which God uses to make us strong and to build into us the elements of victory; but our text excludes these, and centers our thoughts solely upon the influence of the celestial witnesses. It was the glorified dead that put hope and courage and faith and life into the discouraged Hebrew Christians. A thousand faces rose before them in the long vista of history, and with united voice the generations of the past bade them be of good cheer, and trust in God, and triumph. Abel cheered them, and so did Abraham, and so did Moses, and so did Samuel, and so did Rahab. Each voice gave added thrill to the cheer, and all together proclaimed that any man, even though he may be weakened and disfigured by a thousand faults, can succeed and become illustrious if he only let God into his life, and live "as seeing Him who is invisible."

How do the glorified dead help and cheer us? This is the practical question of this sermon, and toward this question we have been pressing from

the very beginning. The answer of this question will assist us in realizing the fact that we do possess their help and cheer. Of what value are our possessions if we are ignorant of them? Ignorance will make us like the farmer who has mines of gold beneath his soil, but who knows it not. He raises nothing but potatoes, nothing but corn, nothing but cattle; yet under the feet of his cattle, and under the soil on which the corn grows, are grains of gold. He is poor in the midst of wealth. Treasures of the soul are ours, and yet we are poor; power is within reach, and yet we are weak; our weakness and our poverty come because we do not know and use what is ours.

I wish to notice two ways in which the glorified dead help us on toward our goal:

I. *They help us by what they have left us as a heritage.*

1. *They have left us the fruitage of their labors.*

The cities we live in, they built them; the institutions we enjoy, they founded them; the great reformations which are being carried on, they inaugurated them; the books in our libraries, they wrote them. Contemporary thought is in the minority in the world of books. We should be different men from what we are, inferior men, if we did not have their cities and their institutions and their reformations and their books and their lives. The world would be infinitely poorer if you took away from it the results which come from the lives of the great men who have gone. They were

all of them altruistic, and lived for coming generations; they enlarged life, broadened it, deepened it. Human life was broader after Abraham lived and exercised his marvelous faith. It was still broader after Moses lived and gave the world the Ten Commandments. It was broader still after the prophets lived and dreamed their enthusiastic dreams, and left the human race their glowing visions of the coming kingdom of God. Men have always been helped by their predecessors, and have climbed to heights upon the greatness and the talents of the departed. Alexander the Great always carried with him a copy of the Iliad, and the hero of the Iliad, Achilles, the mighty man, the self-willed, the stern, the strong, the masterful, capable of bending the world as he wished, became the ideal after which Alexander molded his life. Here is the secret of much that Alexander did. It was Achilles who made him.

Alexander carried the Iliad; you carry the Epistles of Paul and the Apocalypse of John, and your life is sweetened and broadened and illuminated and deepened and ennobled by the writings of these holy men.

*2. They have left us their influences.*

The great ones go away in the flesh only to come back as universal presences. The prophets, for example, seemed almost powerless and useless in their time. But look at the life they have lived since. They have been God's pilots guiding the

Church of the latter days through all its perils. From their black bosoms they send forth the blasts of God's lightning and the roar of His thunder; if the Church needs rebuke to-day, it is they who must hurl it. When George Washington was living he was spoken against and abused; but now he is revered, and his words go one hundred times further, and carry one hundred times more weight and influence than the words of the greatest living American statesman.

3. *They have left us a holy fellowship.*

Although they are invisible, yet we fellowship with them. Physical presence is not necessary for fellowship. We are conscious that we live a great deal of our lives with those whom we never saw; whose human figure we cannot even imagine, but whose poetry, whose essays, whose historical works, whose prayers, whose religious meditations, and whose holy resolutions we read. These good people are more companionable and more personal to us than many whom we behold with the outward vision. They take hold of more points in us, and higher points, than those who dwell beneath the same roof. My fellow-men, the latitude and longitude of the soul are magnificent, and in consequence thereof, great and wide and grand is the wealth of the soul and the life of the soul. Men everywhere in the universe belong to the soul, and it appropriates to itself the sum of all living.

4. *They have left for our admiration genuine greatness worked out in human nature.*

It is everything to us that they once lived in our nature. The sun controls and attracts and dominates the earth, and thrills it with its life and heat, not simply because it is greater than the earth, but also and especially because sun and earth are composed substantially of the same elements. They are of one nature. The earth, as a ring of cosmic vapor, was flung off from the parent planet, the sun. The glorified dead influence us because they and we are in nature substantially one and the same; partakers of their nature, we are susceptible to their sympathies and their aims. Their greatness and purity and nobility reach and stir the greatness and purity and nobility which slumber in us, for, having their nature, we have their attributes to be reached and stirred. By their triumphs they create within us the consciousness of coming glory. First there is awakened in us a response to their nobility as they heroically struggle, then this awakened response develops into downright admiration. There is nothing men so admire, there is no picture that human fancy so delights to paint, as the picture of a man suffering and triumphing. Prometheus bound! Ædipus in Colonus! Hamlet! It is tragic images like these that haunt men with a strange fascination. And why? Because in them we see a man striving, struggling, suffering, and, finally, winning. This

is what we admire. Now what we admire we seek to reproduce, and that we seek to be. Human admirations are the mightiest of all the forces for the molding of character. The heroes of the past fill our admirations with things that make for nobility and manhood and spiritual power and godlikeness.

5. *They have left us their grand words.*

Their words are still with us, and they are life and power. Moses declares, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Will the time ever come when these words shall fail to lead immortal souls into life and light? Joshua declares, "Not one thing that God has promised shall ever fail of fulfillment." Can the world ever forget that? David declares, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they do comfort me." Who that ever heard these sweet words means to let them slip? Mankind has stowed them away down deep in the recesses of human nature, that they may be used in the dying hour. Such are some of the declarations which the glorified dead have left behind them, and each declaration is a cheer that quickens the very roots of our being, and so vitalizes them that our whole nature blossoms and fruits into lofty emotions and holy resolutions and heroic deeds.

There is another form in which the glorified dead help and cheer us; it is the second point of my sermon.

II. *They help and cheer us by their present interest in us, and by their present expectation for us.*

We have found that the lives and examples which the glorified dead have left the world show the possibilities of those who come after. This is much. There is vitality in this. It kindles courage and sustains hope. But this does not cover the whole teaching of my text. The inspired writer declares that there is far more than this; the glorified dead are not witnesses only in this low historical form. We are not simply encompassed about by them in the narrative of the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. That is inadequate as an explanation of the text, and minimizes the reward of the glorified, as well as lessens our possessions. We are compassed about by them personally. This Scripture teaches that the reward of faith lifts a true man at death to a position from which he can look at the whole course of the history of Christ's people and Christ's cause, from beginning to end. The text uses a poetic figure to convey an absolute fact. The figure is taken from the Isthmian games. The racers are on the ground-floor of the vast amphitheater, striving for the crown; on all sides of the theater rise the great galleries, which are built one

above another, tier on tier, forty rows high, almost perpendicular. Out from every seat in these forty tiers looks a human face, with eyes riveted upon the contestants below. These great crowds of excited humanity, towering on every side, remind one of the multitudinous and mountainous clouds which sometimes encircle the horizon of this earth of ours, and throw up their pinnacles and beetling headlands into the air. Raphael introduces such clouds into his pictures; but when we look into the golden mists of Raphael's pictures, these mists resolve themselves into multitudes of calm angel-faces looking down upon the scene.

This is the figure used to picture the glorified dead, and to reveal their attitude toward us. They are interested witnesses, watching us, and knowing us, and wishing us well, and rejoicing in and approving our every right thought and purpose and conquest. Is not this natural? If going to heaven changed our friends and made them indifferent to us, who would wish to have his friends go to heaven? When our friends leave us they do not go out of the kingdom of God; they go more fully into the kingdom of God. They wave their crowns to us, and strike out from their harps of gold every chorus and melody which the strings contain, to thrill us into quicker steps toward them. Because their love has been perfected, their interest in us now is incomparably more intense than was their interest during their earthly life.

This teaching is not novel; it is in accord with the whole trend of the Word of God, as the Word deals with the relations between heaven and earth and the influence of each. Have you forgotten the interest which those in heaven took in the transfiguration scene on Mount Hermon? Here is plainly set forth both knowledge and interest in heaven relative to the activities of earth. Have you forgotten what the angel from heaven told Cornelius, the Roman centurion? He said that the prayers and alms of the Roman were before God in heaven as a memorial of the man. Heaven knew what Cornelius was doing and applauded him; Heaven gave him a memorial even while the man was yet on the earth. The people whom he helped on earth emblazoned his deeds on the streets of Jerusalem above. Have you forgotten the words of the Son of God concerning heaven's knowledge of the conversions on earth? "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth."

Our point is this: the interest and expectation of those who are on the other side of the battlements of heaven are a help to us, and a cheer. It gives us pleasure to be able to gratify them by our well-doing. We put the thought of their approbation of our true life against the lust for riches, and against the words of earthly tempters, and against the gratification of bodily pleasures; and their approbation outweighs these. It outweighs,

too, the realization of all our low ambitions. The thought of the welcome which they will give us when they meet us at the beautiful gate draws us back from sin and keeps us holy.

Instinctively we keep ourselves pure for them. My fellow-men, God puts a tremendous power for good into our lives when He puts into them the consciousness that the eyes of all the good are upon us in the struggles of life. The eyes of the army of Israel resting upon David gave the lad the victory over the giant Goliath.

Our Master serves us as an illustration just here. He shows us the need of our human nature, and the way in which approbation cheers and helps. His experience also touches and illumines some of the dark points of the world over yonder. When He was fronting Calvary with its great battle, Moses and Elijah came to Him and talked over with Him the coming crisis. They told Him how all heaven gathered with interest around the cross, and how the hosts of the redeemed before the throne were all looking to Him for the confirmation of their salvation, and how all heaven was expecting Him to be true. When they left Jesus they left Him with the expectation of the glorified dead beating in His soul as an inspiration. By the stimulus which this gave Him, He went through Gethsemane and conquered on Calvary. What the cloud of witnesses did for Jesus the cloud of witnesses should do for us, the followers of Christ.

Faces from this glorious cloud are looking earthward to see that we carry to completion the purposes which they left us, and the plans which they inaugurated, and the hopes which they cherished.

I have said a great deal about the saints, and about the place which the saints should have in our lives. Let me in closing urge something for the Master. Above all things we need Him in our lives. In running our race we must look to Jesus. Sometimes in using our other helps we forget Him, and largely crowd Him out of our lives; even the best of men do this. Our liability to err here is strikingly set forth by the noted dream of Junius, one of the old, old saints of by-gone years. Junius was perfectly satisfied with himself and with his success in life. His dream was this: One night a stranger came into his room and greeted him with a smile, and asked him, "Junius, how is your zeal?" Conceiving of his zeal as a physical quantity, Junius put his hand into his bosom, and brought his zeal forth and presented it to the stranger for inspection. The stranger took it and put it into the scales which he carried, and carefully weighed it. "One hundred pounds," he exclaimed. Junius was pleased. The stranger, pushing his investigation further, broke the mass into atoms, and put all into a crucible, and put the crucible into the fire; when the mass was thoroughly fused, he took it out and set it down to cool. It congealed in cooling, and when turned

out on the hearth exhibited a series of layers or strata, all of which fell apart at the touch of the hammer. The stranger severely tested and weighed each, and took careful notes. When he had finished, he presented the analysis to Junius. The paper of notes read thus: "Analysis of the zeal of Junius, a candidate for the crown of glory. His zeal amounts, in all, to one hundred pounds. Bigotry, ten pounds; personal ambition, twenty-three pounds; love of praise, nineteen pounds; pride of denomination, fifteen pounds; pride of talent, fourteen pounds; love of authority, twelve pounds; love to fellow-man, three pounds; love to Jesus Christ, four pounds." When he read the paper, Junius was smitten with instantaneous conviction, and cried to heaven, "O Christ, take Junius out of my life, and put Thyself into it. Help me to live by Thee and for Thee." Like the reconstructed Junius, we should make Christ our goal in life. The building up of self, and the winning of the approbation of the good, should be made secondary and contributory to our loyalty to Christ.

The question of application which I wish to put to you is this: *Are you letting Christ into your life as the dominating influence?* If you have not hitherto let Him come in, let Him now come in with all His light and all His transforming power. Do you know what He will do for you if you let Him come in? He will teach you, first of all, your

possibilities; He will show you the sonship of God which belongs to you; He will give you the true ideal of a true life; He will create within you a faith in yourself; He will fill you with His own expectations with regard to you; He will develop within you a consciousness of power possessed; He will teach you large things, and inspire you to work toward them; He will put an "*Excelsior*" into your heart. Do you not know that in order to the uplifting of man, the very first need is the creation within man of faith in himself, a belief that through the grace of God he can reach his highest aspirations? According to our faith, so is it with us. The child that is constantly called "dunce" or "fool," first suspects that he is a "dunce" or a "fool," then believes that he is; and finally comes to be a "dunce" or a "fool." There is no trouble in making a man better, if he believes he can be made better, or if he wishes to become better. But when he is content to be precisely what he is, or when he has lost faith in himself, or sees no future for himself, there is no use in trying. The old story connected with the mythological wanderings of Ulysses, as told in the *Odyssey* of Homer, is in point here as an illustration. A number of the companions of Ulysses fell into the hands of the sorceress Circe and were turned into swine. If, in that condition, they could have remembered that they were once men; if they could have remembered their homes, the wars in

which they fought, the ambitions and the strivings of their manhood; if they could have desired to return to their country, and become again something more than the occupants of a pen and a bed of straw—then there would have been hope for them, that they might some day have been delivered from the power of the sorceress. But they were content to be nothing more than swine, and hence their case was hopeless. Christ breaks the spell of sin which robs men of the consciousness of what they are and may be; He shows the human race “the Son of God,” which is potentially in every man; He helps us to believe in ourselves, and to aspire for ourselves, and to take an interest in ourselves.

My fellow-men, it is Christ in a man that makes the man. We need that the fibers of our being shall be locked and interlocked with the fibers of His being; then through His working and power in us wonderful things will be produced. Thus it was in the past; thus it will be in the future. It is Christ who marches through the ages in the noble personalities which make the centuries grand and sublime. A miner’s son, who sang in the streets for his bread, led the Reformation, and unbound the Bible for the world. Christ made Luther! A farmer, with the Spirit of God in him, laid broad and deep the foundations of England’s liberties. Christ made Cromwell! A jail-bird was so transformed that he was able to write the

“Pilgrim’s Progress.” Christ made John Bunyan! A lonely man, with the living Christ in his heart, who died in the heart of Africa upon his knees, with his head pillowed upon the Bible, opened the Dark Continent to Christian civilization. Christ made David Livingstone! If you are to be anything in the world, Christ must make you. You can succeed only by His permission and help. Have you let Him into your life to work and to build up and to transform? You are *neighborly* with Him; but that will not do. He must be allowed to become something more than your neighbor. He must be admitted into your heart. He must be allowed to abide at the very focus of your being, and in the very springs of your life. Mere neighborliness would never have made Paul or John. It took personal, enthusiastic faith and love and surrender to make them. That you may reach the goal of life, that you may realize your best possible self, that you may be what Christ can make you, I call upon you to make an absolute surrender of your soul and body and spirit to Christ. Open your whole life to His in-coming.

VIII.

CRUCIFYING CHRIST WHILE APPROPRIATING  
HIS ROBES.



## VIII.

### CRUCIFYING CHRIST WHILE APPROPRIATING HIS ROBES.

*"And they crucified Him, and parted His garments."*—MATTHEW 27: 35.

THE story of the cross is most powerfully told. And yet it is simply told. Indeed, we might say that it is not told at all. That is, there is no effort in the telling of it. It tells itself. The event carries in itself its own power. I often contrast it in my own thought with the way uninspired writers tell their stories.

For example, I contrast the story of the cross, as we have it on the Gospel page, with the address of Mark Antony over the dead body of Cæsar. How dramatic Mark Antony is! What effort (skilled effort) he puts forth! What labored periods he utters! What a study after effect he displays! He acts; he elocutionizes; he uses the rent robe of Cæsar and the dying will of Cæsar. He uses the dagger of Cassius. He uses his own personality, and puts the crowd under the play of

his own agony and moves the people by the contagion of his own strong feeling. Mark Antony's address is passion at a white heat, and the dead body of Cæsar owes two thirds of its power to that passion. It was Cæsar's dead body *plus* Mark Antony's burning words and skillful art and deep passion at a white heat that moved Rome from center to circumference. But you say, "Mark Antony was full of intense feeling; Mark Antony felt the death of Cæsar down to the core of his being." Yes, no doubt; but Matthew and John, the biographers of Jesus Christ, were also full of feeling. They felt the death of Christ down to the core of their being. They wrote out of an anguished heart. Yet there is not a trace of passion on the sacred page. There is not a word to show how they felt. There is not a tear. There is not a single burst of indignation. There is nothing like "*And here ran Cassius' dagger through,*" or "*If you have tears to shed, prepare to shed them now.*"

To me this is remarkable. It centers my attention; it sets me thinking; it brings me face to face with the question, "Why is this?" I believe that this is the reason why: God wants us to look at the fact of the crucifixion of His Son uninfluenced, and so completely uninfluenced that we may come to our own unaided conclusion with regard to it. That we may be permitted to judge it unbiased, He keeps out of the story all the human passion of

the narrator and compels us to stand face to face with the fact, and with the fact only. The Gospel narrator uses words, just as the artist uses pigments, and paints what transpires just as it transpires. But he paints well. He paints exactly. He puts the power of life into every picture. In the crucial picture, for instance, you see the crucifical hammer strike the nail which pierces Christ's hands and feet, and the blow is so vivid that the stroke of that crucifical hammer is heard not only on the mountains of Palestine, but it echoes and rings throughout the universe. Every picture pertaining to the cross is as true to life as this picture is. All are portrayed with exactitude, viz.: the reeling earth; the rending rocks; the darkened sun; the mocking Pharisees; the callous Romans; the weeping Galilean women; the unthinking crowd; and the gambling soldiers. All these are as vivid and as real as the picture which shows us the blow driving the cruel nail through the quivering flesh.

But it is my purpose in dealing with these pictures which give us the story of the cross, to be *eclectic* and not *comprehensive*. We are compelled, by the limit of time at our disposal, to make a choice, and to confine our thoughts to that choice. We choose but one picture, and that the picture of *the soldiers in their relation to Christ*.

The story of the soldiers at the cross is easily told. They were Romans. They were stationed

at Jerusalem in the Tower of Antonia, and were the executioners of Roman law in the province of Judæa. They were men who had no will of their own; they were instruments in the hands of those who were in authority. It was they who drove the nails and transfixed Jesus to the cross; but they did this at the command of Pilate, the Roman governor. They had little heart in the matter one way or the other. Their familiarity with such scenes made them as nearly indifferent as it was possible to be. They were used to shrieks of agony, and to writhing forms on crosses, and to the white emaciated faces of dead criminals. Having crucified Christ, they had nothing further to do but to stand guard around the cross until suffering had issued in death. Yes, there was one thing more which they had to do; but it was a thing which was not distasteful to them—they had to divide among them the robes of the Christ whom they had just nailed to the cross. These were theirs as part of their hire for the bloody work which they had done. They cared nothing for Christ, but they did care for His garments. While they were yet warm with the warmth of the sacred person of Christ, and in the presence of the Suffering One who looked down at them from the cross, they gave themselves to the task of dividing his robes, and eagerly each soldier took his portion.

We can scarcely bear to think of it—these com-

mon, coarse men wearing Christ's garments. If John wore that seamless robe, the touching of the hem of which once gave health and life to the sick and dying, that would be a comfort to us; but there is a positive shock in the thought that the brutal Roman soldier, who drove the nails through the quivering nerves of the Redeemer's flesh, should publicly and boastingly wear it over his rough form and his heart of stone. There is a resemblance and there is a sympathy between John and Jesus; but there is neither resemblance nor sympathy between a Roman soldier and Jesus. Christ's robe worn by the Roman soldier who crucified Him! The thing is utterly incongruous. It is mortifying. It is humiliating. It is startling.

The mistake of the soldiers was this: the garments of Christ were everything to them, but Christ Himself was nothing to them. They esteemed and valued the garments, but despised the Christ. They overlooked the fact that if there had been no Christ there would have been no seamless robe to appropriate and enjoy. The robe without Christ had a certain value, it is true; but with a living Christ in it it was infinitely more valuable. When Christ was in the robe, it had healing virtue; but when Christ was crucified, it had no healing, life-giving power whatever.

There are multitudes to-day who are like these soldiers. For example, there are crowds of citizens

in this republic who glory in the civil rights which our national fathers bequeathed, but they hate and crucify the Christ of our fathers. It was under the inspiration of Christ that our fathers sacrificed and fought for the civil rights which they bequeathed us. If there had been no Christ, there would have been no Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock, and no Covenanters in the Carolinas, and no Huguenots in New Jersey, and no Hollanders in New York. Without the Plymouth Rock Pilgrims, and the Covenanters, and the Huguenots, and the Hollanders, there would have been no Revolutionary War. If there had been no Revolutionary War there would have been no Republic of the United States. There is no fact more patent in history than this: *American freedom owes its origin to Jesus Christ.* Yet there are Americans by the thousands who take the freedom and crucify the Christ. But what is freedom dissociated from Christ? What is it worth in comparison with freedom which throbs with the life of Christ? Freedom, when it is a robe with the living Christ in it, will cure and keep in life the nations which touch its hem; but freedom, when it is a robe torn from the sacred person of Christ and with no Christ in it, will let the nations die, even while they own it and handle it and boast about it. As a nation we needed Christ to procure our liberty, and as a nation we need Christ to continue to us our liberty.

We can see what God will do for a nation if we

look into the story of that old historic nation of the world, the Jewish nation. Although China is an older nation chronologically, yet in comparison with it, China, strictly speaking, cannot be said to have a history. Why was the Jewish nation what it was? Why did it outlive such mighty nations as the Chaldean, the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Phœnician, the Egyptian, the Grecian, the Roman? The answer is, it had a different God from these nations. Its God was the one living and true God. The right relation between us and the true God, that is what makes the difference between man and man, and between nation and nation, and between civilization and civilization. There is everything in the way we treat God and His Christ.

Having sketched thus briefly the story of the soldiers at the cross, it is my purpose in this sermon to set forth the fact that the story of the soldiers is a parable, and the conduct of the soldiers in appropriating the garments of Christ is a typical and continuous act. The soldiers are an ancient type of a modern class. Our community is full of men and women who prize and enjoy and appropriate the blessings flowing from Christ, whom to-day they are crucifying. I am anxious that they shall see this, and that they shall in the presence of God answer to their own souls such questions as these: "Is this right?" "Does it accord with the fitness of things?" "Is it honorable, as men in the common plane of life judge things to be

honorable?" "Is it generous?" "Is it manly?" "Is it square?" I am anxious that they shall answer this question also: "Wherein are we differentiated from the Roman soldiers?" I am anxious that they shall see what Christ is in the world, and what He has done for them, and what they in all fairness owe Him. I want to bring them face to face with Christ for serious, straightforward thought, and for unequivocal final decision. I am seeking to make honest, whole-hearted followers of Jesus Christ. I am seeking for enthusiasm, faith, love, entire surrender; and I am seeking these for One who has earned them, and who has a right to them from every soul that lives in Christendom.

If I am at all to succeed in my aim, the first thing I must do is this: enunciate without reserve this fact, viz.:

*All who live in Christendom have to deal with Christ; whether they will or no, they pronounce upon Him pro or con.*

My fellow-men, we are like the people who were around the literal cross of Christ on the literal Calvary. There is no escape for us; we are bound either to crown Christ or to crucify Christ. If we do not the one, we do the other.

I am asked: "But would Jesus Christ be crucified over again by the men who once crucified Him?—i.e., if they were now living, and if He appeared in this year A.D.?" If not, it would be

owing to the influences which He has left, and which have been enlightening the world. It would be a burning shame if He were. The cross to-day, with Christ nailed to it by human hands, would be a greater crime than the cross on Calvary in the beginning of the Christian era. But I refuse to answer this question further. It is designed to switch me off from the point which I have in hand, and which I am pressing upon your hearts for recognition. The point I am pressing is: We who live in Christendom to-day have to deal with Christ personally, and we are morally identified in spirit with the men who dealt with Him in the past. It signifies nothing what those men would do to-day were they now living; we know what they did at Calvary. The nineteenth century is only the echo of the first century. What does signify is this: What are we doing with Christ? The different characters around the cross are all duplicated and live on. Christ is nailed to the cross to-day. Some nail Him to the cross of criticism, and crucify Him on the literary cross. Some nail Him to the cross of neglect; some nail Him to the cross of indifference; some nail Him to the cross of rejection; some nail Him to the cross of downright unbelief. Does it make any difference what cross you nail Him to? Nail Him to any cross, and it is crucifixion, and crucifixion in any form is a treatment Jesus Christ does not deserve at your hands.

We are something and somebody with regard to Christ. This is the point with which we start out. There are some people who would like to get rid of Christ, and they act as though they had gotten rid of Him. But have they? No, and they cannot get rid of Him. We have got to take our stand. We are the Roman soldiers, or the deserting disciples, or John standing at the cross full of love, or Mary looking upon the scenes of suffering with a broken heart, or the scribes and Pharisees and rulers mocking and jeering. We are something and somebody with regard to Christ.

Here is a man who says, "I am free from Christ. I have no relations with Him whatever. I have nothing to do with Him *pro* or *con*. *I am an agnostic; a know-nothing.* I say nothing about the great questions of God and of immortality and of religion and of morals. These religious matters are as the politics of the moon to me. I am busy with the things of this life, the things present and near. I have enough to do to secure for myself moderate success and happiness; and if I have spare energy there are present evils enough to engage my attention without troubling myself about such unknown and unknowable objects as God and the soul. Concerning these things I affirm nothing, and I deny nothing." Well, that is your creed; and with your creed to-day you stand face to face with Jesus Christ,

and what does Christ say to you? Christ says to you, "O agnostic, I know something about these matters. I believe in God and in the soul and in immortality, and My character and My life come out of My faith in these things." Do you not see that your creed is the very opposite of Christ's creed, and that in it you condemn Christ's creed, and pronounce judgment upon Christ Himself? By your creed you say in so many words, "Either Christ is a deceiver, or else He is Himself self-deceived." Agnostic, if you are right, Jesus Christ is wrong. Your agnosticism, for which you claim such neutrality, keeps Him out of your life, and bolts the door of your heart in His face. Your agnosticism is not one whit better than downright and outright unbelief. It bars the door of your nature against Christ. He who bars the door of his nature and life against Christ rejects Christ, denies Christ, crucifies Christ. It is impossible for us to get away from the words of Christ Himself on this matter: "*He that is not for Me is against Me.*"

But why should we wish to get away from Christ? Or why should we seek escape from decision with regard to Him? He is God's best gift to the world, and loyal alliance with Him is the highest destiny that any man can reach.

Let us spend the rest of our time in looking at Jesus and at the blessings which He is constantly

scattering around us, and which we are appropriating and using even while we are refusing to do our full duty to Him!

1. *Christ Jesus Himself, His simple existence, is the first blessing which I ask you to think about.*

There are men whose very being is a blessing to the community. They are like a beautiful woman whose beauty is all the argument she needs for existing. What they are in themselves is an inspiration and an uplift. Christ stands at the head of this class. He walked our earth as a perfect man. He brought into the midst of humanity a perfect ideal; and what is more, He embodied that perfect ideal in a complete and fully rounded perfect life. It is something to have some one do that. It is something to have some one beyond and above us, showing us the grand possibilities of human nature, and calling us upward and on. The powerful manhood of Christ, the transparent sweetness and gentleness of His impulses and actions, have magnetized the human imagination and have kindled the loftiest aspirations toward His majestic symmetry. The Son of God blessed the world by simply becoming incarnate, by being what He was: so rich and so unchangeable and so disinterested in His love; so pure and so holy and so unselfish in His desires; so noble, so lofty, and so self-sacrificing in His aims; so full of deeds that were absolutely God-like; and so beautifully full and complete in His character.

His bare existence, the fact that He was, gave the world of mankind such an uplifting vision of what men ought to be, and of what God wants them to be, that no power can ever quench the new-born ambition in the human race. It is impossible for the world ever to be the same as it was before Jesus Christ came. Now, there is not a soul in Christendom to-day but knows of the existence of Jesus Christ—who He was, and what He was; there is no soul in Christendom that has not touched Him in history, and that has not received from that touch a vision, a new life, which will never allow the soul to be contented with the low plane in which it was before it touched Christ and caught a glimpse through Christ of what it is possible for human nature to become. My point is this: My fellow-men, give Jesus Christ all that it is possible for you to give Him, do for Him all that it is possible for you to do for Him, and you never can repay Him for the results that have come to you through that touch. This blessing of which we speak, viz., coming into intellectual contact with Christ, is a blessing given to all who live in Christendom and who do nothing more than read the story of the Christ; but it is a blessing beyond the power of our ability to repay.

2. *I ask you to think about a second blessing, viz., the knowledge which Christ brought with Him into the world—a knowledge which no other one could or did bring.*

We forget what we owe Jesus by way of knowledge. We forget how He feeds the inner and better man. We forget how He gives us true and high views of God. To magnify the value of Jesus in this regard, God gave the world a chance to do its best before He sent His son. He gave the human race four thousand years to demonstrate that it had no need of Jesus Christ, that it could climb to spiritual heights alone. He gave men four thousand years to prove that human nature was enough and sufficient in itself to work out the highest wisdom, to find out God, to build the institutions mankind needed, to get man into right relationships with his fellow-man, to crush all evil out of existence, to develop the human heart, and to inaugurate the reign of universal love. Were not four thousand years sufficient? If not, how much time would you ask? Four thousand years were amply sufficient; they were far more than enough for human nature to work out all its possibilities and leave absolutely nothing for Christ to do when He came—i.e., if human nature in itself were sufficient without Christ.

No brighter eras of mere human, uninspired, intellectual achievements have since appeared than the ages of Pericles and Augustus. The lays of Homer and of Virgil; the orations of Demosthenes and of Cicero; the histories of Thucydides and of Tacitus; the Parthenon, the Venus de Medici, and the Apollo Belvidere—these are all

ideal types in literature and in art. "Yet the world by wisdom knew not God." The beautiful was there in the past, but it lacked the good and the true. The regalement of the life of sense was all and in all in the civilization before Christ. There was no provision for the wants of the inner man. There was no emphasis of the fatherhood of God. There was no dogmatic, unequivocal assertion of the immortality of the soul. There was no enunciation or embodiment in the affairs of life of the grand universal brotherhood of man. By the way of a god there was nothing better than Jupiter. Man was not treated in a way worthy of his divine sonship. It was Jesus Christ who created enthusiasm for humanity. It was Jesus Christ who discovered and proclaimed the worth of the individual. It was He who taught that each man is a son of God and should be treated according to this high view. He should not be a slave in any form. He should be a free man. It is from Christ that we learn to see the value of man, and to pity the needs of man, and to comfort the sorrows of man, and to feel the brotherhood of the race. He lived for man, taught man, and died for man.

The complete knowledge which Jesus brought with Him—whence was it? Whence? We know how we acquire knowledge. We painfully pick it up amid what survives of the past. Babylonian bricks, Sinaitic rocks, Assyrian remains, contribute slowly, under torture, to add to our stock of knowl-

edge. But whence had this man wisdom? Nineteen hundred years after His ascension, the world knows no religious thought that was not embraced in what He taught. We ransack the great religions which have a history and a literature, and discover not a single addition to the world's stock of religious thought since the close of the revelation of Jesus Christ. With all the discoveries of the modern centuries we have not been able to find a substitute for, or to supplant the teachings of, the New Testament. In every point of morals, as in every phase of theology, Christ is the world's master. "He has beggared the past and bankrupted the future."

Do you not see how He has blessed us in all this? In giving us the true He has blessed us by saving us from the false and imperfect. By giving us Himself He has saved us from Zoroaster and Confucius and Buddha and Mohammed. Who would have these men rule and reign in America? Who wants to believe in their prescribed life and in the heaven which they teach shall follow it? Who wants the civilization which they produce? There is not a man here to-day who does not find his protection from these in Jesus Christ. Even those of you who have not yet owned Christ and acknowledged His claims upon you are blessed by Christ in this regard. The greatness of the blessing which you thus receive is to be measured by the difference between native China and native

India and native Persia and native Turkey, and Christian America with its laws and liberties.

3. *The third blessing which I ask you to think about is great Christendom. The gift of Christ to the world is Christendom.*

That I may not double the track which is so often followed in treating this point, let me enumerate at this time some features of Christendom not usually named or considered.

Among the distinguishing characteristics of Christendom is *the Anglo-Saxon race and its achievements*. We are Anglo-Saxons, and we are proud of it. But who made our race what it is, and who blessed it with the blessings which we enjoy? Before Christ found our fathers, the people of the Anglo-Saxon race were a set of heathen. There was a time when the Angles were sold under the hammer in the slave-marts of Britain. We talk of this race as the dominant race, the master race of the world. We tell of its achievements in England and in Germany and in America; and these are marvelous as compared with the achievements of other races. We predict for it a glowing future in numbers, in civilization, in religion, in discoveries and inventions, in the progress of freedom, and in the rule and supremacy of ideas. No doubt this future will be realized in a large degree; but it will be realized because of the largeness of Christ's identification with the Anglo-Saxon race. It is a race full of

Christ. It is a race penetrated and interpenetrated with the ideas of Christianity, and with the social forces of Christianity, and with the ethical results of Christianity. The race is one of Christ's historic miracles—a very incarnation of Christ in civilization. You know that England was not reclaimed from barbarism until the conversion of her Saxon conquerors in the sixth century to Christianity. When by the preaching of the Word the fierce tribes of Hengist and Horsa were persuaded to exchange their dark idol-prayers and their hoarse battle-cry for the hallelujahs of the Christian worship—then, and only then, did the “Sceptered Isle” enter upon that career which made it what it is to-day.

If there is such a thing as “a natural law of historic progress,” and if that is all-sufficient as an explanation of the progress of civilization, as such writers as Hegel and Comte and Buckle contend, how shall we solve the problem of the present condition of China and Hindustan when we compare them with Britain and Germany? In China and Hindustan letters and philosophy flourished in the remote ages when the cruel rites of Druidism were practiced in Britain, and when the savage tribes who inhabited Germany worshiped Odin and Thor. To what can we refer the present differences between these countries? To what but to the influence of Christ? To Christ absent from the former ;

to Christ present with the latter. There is not a worshiper in the Christian temple to-day but enjoys the blessings which come through the proud Anglo-Saxon race. Are you ready to acknowledge in God's way the origin of these blessings which you appropriate? Are you willing to do your duty by Christ, and help keep the Anglo-Saxon race in living and loyal union with the only source of its blessings?

4. *I would mention just here another blessing which pertains to us as inhabitants of Christendom. It is this : the grand humanities which characterize our age.*

But I am asked, What is your proof that these pertain to Christ? I answer, This is my proof: these did not exist before Christ. Search the Byzantine chronicles and the pages of Publius Victor, and though the one describes all the public edifices of ancient Constantinople, and the other those of ancient Rome, not a word is to be found in either of a charitable institution. Search the ancient marbles in the museums of the world, descend and ransack the graves of Herculaneum and Pompeii, question the travelers who have visited the ruins of the cities of Greece and Rome, and in vain will you seek for the report of a single public institution of mercy built and supported for the alleviation of human want and misery. These things in the life of mankind and in the history of

the world *follow the cross of Jesus Christ*. Yet there are men by the thousands who fill these institutions and crucify Christ.

“But do we not find to-day, and in America, humanities pushed and supported by those who refuse allegiance to Christ?” That is a fair question. And I answer it fairly. Yes, a few; a very few. “How, then, do you explain these?” Where these exist with any vitality, I give the credit of them to Christ. I do so because they are pushed and supported in Christian America. I recognize some people to be for Christ who believe themselves to be against Him. They have more Christianity than they suppose. Christianity is in the atmosphere, and they breathe it unconsciously. Often those who boast most loudly of their independence of our Lord owe the whole formation of their life and character to His influence. They read the Bible in their youth and absorbed its precepts, and now, later in life, they forget their indebtedness. They are living in the afterglow of Christian sentiment. Let these go out of America, out from the sunlight of Christendom, and set up their claims and push their humanities and endeavor to bless nations where there are no humanities, and they will see just how long their humanities will last. But I must not waste time with these. At best they are only an invisible drop in the bucket.

My friend, who is at the head of the city mis-

sion work of New York, told me that he once met some people of this order, and he put them and their boasting to a practical test by giving them city mission work to do. But the result was they proved to be all sentiment and nothing else, and soon evaporated from the field. They were cultured in liberal thinking. They were ethical and æsthetic and what not. The blood of Christ! Oh, they could not bear to talk of such a thing. The deity of Christ! That, of course, was a myth. Christ was a good man—yes, that was it exactly. Like Cain, the first man who pooh-poohed at the sacrifice of blood, they fussed æsthetically around the altar and tastefully arranged flowers and fruits there—i.e., they gave a sewing lesson on fancy work to a half-clad woman, and they tried to teach some poor girls popular airs; but of nursing the sick and of doing the real needed things demanded in a New York tenement they got heartily tired in a single week, and then petered out. I tell you that the real spirit of downright humanities is not in such people, boast as they may, and it is not in them because Jesus Christ in His fullness is not in them. Christ with His deity and Christ with His cross is not in them; and no one who is minus the cross and minus the deity of Jesus Christ is able for any kind of enduring work which requires whole-hearted and continuous self-sacrifice.

5. *I can only mention one additional blessing*

*which comes to us from our accidental relations with Christendom. It is this : the men and women with whom we associate and who enter into our friendships are largely Christian.*

There are no friendships like the friendships of our homes. Now, Christ made the ideal home of America. He set the value upon the child there, and He set the value upon woman there. Love in the home has its highest play only when Christ is living in the heart of husband and wife, father and mother, son and daughter, brother and sister. Christ is blessing you through your home to-day.

What we say of our homes we may say of our business alliances. When the honor and integrity and consideration and truthfulness which are inculcated by Jesus Christ are in them, they are pleasant and enjoyable. The men whom we secretly admire in business, and with whom we delight to do business, are the men who conduct business as nearly as possible upon the principles which are known to be Christian.

My fellow-men, Christ Jesus is meeting us on all hands, and dealing with us, and influencing us, and molding us, by means of and through our Christian friends, the men and women in whom He dwells and through whom He finds a constant outlet. Through them there come to us day after day gracious and strong and inspiring exhibitions of the love and truth of Christ. They are Christ reborn and living again among us. In them God

is felt and admired and loved. They have so united their lives with Christ that it is no longer they who live, but Christ who lives in them. They are gateways to Christ, and in them we are dealing with all that is lovely and grand in Christ, even when we wist not. They are Christ's living epistles. Contact with them is touching the hem of Christ's garment, and we receive by the contact healing and purifying virtue.

In looking at what we receive by absorption through our daily contact with Christian men and women, I can understand the answer which an eminent American woman gave to one who asked her the question, "What was the most influential sight you saw in Europe when there?" Her reply was, "*Lucretia Mott.*" She had met Lucretia Mott, another American woman, and she had heard her plead the cause of those who were in chains, and she had felt the power of her great Christ soul. Lucretia Mott had done more to mold her life than all the galleries and cathedrals and mountains and cities of Europe combined. My fellow-men, it is in our friendships with the Christians about us that we find an outlet for our better nature and a support for our higher life. It is these friends who interpret Christ to us, and make real and tangible His ideals, and in them Christ is most potent. In them we have the truth personified, living, walking, speaking, loving. They are proofs of the reality of God and of Christ, and of the adaptabil-

ity of the Christian religion to all the spheres of our life. There is not one of us but is blest in a hundred ways by the lives and the loves and the principles and the examples of Christian men and women who are Christ's representatives on earth. The question is, *Are you willing to acknowledge your indebtedness to Christ for these men and women by means of whom Christ is blessing you?* When Christ Jesus looks down from the cross, in what attitude does He see you? Does He behold you appropriating His robes while you are crucifying Him? You should seek to be worthy of wearing the Master's garments. I do not blame you for taking the blessings of Christ; but I do blame you for refusing to identify yourself with Christ your benefactor, and giving Him and His cause in return the whole power of your life and personality.

The duty which I have now to press home upon you is the duty of gratitude. For the blessings which you receive from Christ you owe Him the payment of a debt of gratitude. And no one is exempt, for there is not a soul in Christendom that is unblest of Christ. It is our duty not only not to crucify Him, but it is our duty to crown Him. We crown Washington; we crown Jefferson; we crown Lincoln; why not Christ?

I have seen the members of a family lovingly and daily care for the old canary, which was blind and paralyzed and voiceless and featherless and

songless. Why? Because it had once filled the home with music and had made the air vibrate with its warbling trills. The treatment given the old bird was only common decency. Why not treat Christ with decency? You wear the robes of His blessing: honor Him for these; serve Him in return for these; show your gratitude for these. Away with your poverty of conception concerning Jesus Christ; bring into your souls this very day the fullness of knowledge. Learn who He is, and what He has done, and what He stands ready to do. We owe Him the Christian atmosphere which we all breathe. Every garment of civilization worth wearing belongs to Him. While we take the garments let us take the Christ also. In the matter of blessing He is the great unknown quantity of the future. He still has as His reserve the twelve legions. You need Him and His fullness. Take Him, and publicly credit Him for all you receive from Him.



IX.

THINGS OF CHILDHOOD TO BE CARRIED  
INTO MATURE LIFE.



## IX.

### THINGS OF CHILDHOOD TO BE CARRIED INTO MATURE LIFE.

*“And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”—MATTHEW 18 : 2, 3.*

THERE is nothing in my text that stands in the way of growth. Growth is the law of all living and healthful being. Life and growth, strength and growth, are forever inseparable. There is one thing that is an utter impossibility in this universe, and that is a vigorous, robust life at a standstill.

There is nothing in my text, when rightly interpreted, that contradicts other utterances of Scripture which require a fully developed manhood and womanhood. The text does not clash with the *Excelsior* which God has implanted in every human heart. It does not conflict with Paul's utterance in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, where he says: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away

childish things." It does not war with the ideal which Paul sets before us in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, where he says: "We must all grow till we come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Christianity will always have its ideals, and these will always be in advance of man, and will always act as a heavenly voice calling man on and up. When Christianity ceases to lead humanity, it will die, and it should die. My text argues simply that the best of childhood be carried into manhood; just as in nature that which is essential in the blossom is carried forward and embodied in the fruit.

Childhood as enjoined in the text is a *quality rather than a condition; a quality rather than a stage of life*. Childhood as a quality can grow and develop into a stalwart manhood and into a magnificent womanhood; but childhood as a condition, childhood as a stage of life, must always remain a childhood with its limitations. It is not the will of God that childhood as a condition shall remain. It is His decree that the infant shall remain an infant only for a very little time. He has given this commission to all the laws that govern human life, viz.: "O ye laws that govern human life, and that operate to fulfill My will, see to it that the little girl with the flowing ringlets shall be a wayfarer in the home only for

the night; start her in the morning on her journey toward womanhood. And see to it also that the sunny little boy in the home shall keep her company, pressing on his way toward manhood." There is nothing so magnetic or so influential in the home as a babe, and sometimes we feel like keeping it a babe always. But that is not the will of God. The baby says such pretty things, and has such cunning ways, and the touch of its little hand is so soft, and the sound of its little voice is so sweet, and its little face with dimpled cheeks and curling lips is so full of beauty, and there is such a charm in its tiny fingers and in its little round arms and in its little pink feet without a line of world's wear, and it is so graceful and charming in all its movements, that the whole family goes baby-mad and votes unanimously that the babe shall always be a babe. But such is not the will of God. With God there is no legitimate ultimatum this side of perfect manhood and perfect womanhood. Each child comes into the world charged with a manifold life, gifted and dowered with faculties and forces and sublime possibilities, and these faculties and forces must be used and enlarged, and these possibilities must be reached.

Let me particularize. We would not have our children remain stationary in knowledge, neither would we remain stationary ourselves. We would grow and have them grow in all knowledge, but especially in the knowledge of God. Paul, who com-

mands us in these words, "Brethren, be children in malice," in the very same verse, and with the very same dip of the pen, writes, "But in understanding be men." That is precisely what we feel, and that is exactly the way we would word our feeling. There is a vast growth of knowledge possible to us the moment we come into this life, and it is our ambition to enter upon this growth. Especially should we wish to grow in our knowledge of God. The deepest cry of our soul should be this: "*We would know more of God.*" Even with the most advanced Christian there is large desire for growth in the God-knowledge.

Hear a parable. A living infant in the arms of its dead mother was rescued from a raft which drifted ashore after the wrecking of a ship. Its father was supposed to have gone down with the ship. The infant grew into a lad, and the lad grew into a man, because of the care of the kind-hearted strangers who rescued him. As his faculties matured, he began to notice that other boys had fathers, and reasoned himself into the belief that he too had a father. Then he was told that his father had perished in the wreck. When he grew larger he longed to have a more definite conception of his father whom he had never seen. Very naturally he concluded that by heredity some likeness of his father was in himself. And so, standing before the mirror, he conceived and defined to himself his father's appearance from his

own image in the glass. These were his words: "Like me, he was five feet and ten inches in height, slight, with dark-brown hair, gray eyes, solitary in his habits, and given to abstract thinking and imagining." His conceptions were partly correct and partly erroneous.

Like this orphan, we are striving after a true and a large knowledge of God. But we are seeing in or through a glass darkly. We reason from ourselves up to God. We fasten our attention on the highest and best in us, and we say, "God is like the best in us." We have had our child-knowledge of Him, and we have broadened this knowledge from a child-knowledge into a man-knowledge. But still we need to grow in our ideas. It would never do for us to stay stationary where we are. Our conceptions of God, even though skillfully built up, are only partly correct.

But hear the conclusion of the parable. The young man's father was not drowned. While the raft drifted ashore bearing his dead wife and his living son, he drifted out to sea clinging to a spar. After many hours he was picked up by a passing vessel. Believing that his wife and child had perished, he wandered over the earth and the ocean a desolate and sorrowing man. One day, on the street of a certain city, he saw a face that so much resembled that of his long-lost wife that he was compelled to speak. The result was the discovery that he was face to face with his long-lost and

long-mourned son. When all was explained the son began to see how much of error there was in the conception he had formed of his father while viewing himself in the mirror. He had pictured to himself a slight man, five feet ten, dark hair, gray eyes; but he saw in his father a sea-captain, who was a Swede with the blood of the Norsemen in his veins. His father was a giant in stature, with flaxen hair and blue eyes, and a skin which had been lily-white before the spray of salt waves and rude ocean winds and tropical sun had browned it. One day he said to his father, "Father, I used to look at myself in the mirror, and picture you such as I was. In many points I was wrong, but I glory in my disappointment. You are in every way grander than was my thought of you."

Like this young man's knowledge of his father, our knowledge of God is partial. It needs correction. It needs growth. It needs broadening. It needs the enlargement which experience can give it. It needs the correction which the teaching of the inspired Book can give it. It needs the additions which come from the comparison of our views with the views of the men and women who love God and seek after God. It needs more than all this; for all this is only seeing God through a glass darkly. *It needs the open vision of God Himself* which God will give us when we pass into the eternal world and see Him face to face. It needs the tuition of heaven. In point of knowl-

edge there is a vast difference between the child starting in life and the full matured man studying God in the light of heaven. Which would you rather be, the child or the man?

The man only is God's ultimatum. He says unto us, "Be men," and the text does not stand in the way of His command. Nay, rather it opens before us the only way whereby we can reach the full manhood of knowledge. The text binds us to childhood only as a quality, and not to childhood as a period of time. It binds us to childlikeness, not to childishness. Childhood as a quality includes teachableness; now teachableness is essential to the acquisition of knowledge. Teachableness is the prophecy and promise of full-orbed knowledge.

While we strive to grasp the fact that there are some things in childhood which should forever remain with us, we are particular to assert *that there are some things which we should outgrow and forever drop*. All that is in childhood should not be carried forward. In order to a true manhood and womanhood it is as essential to drop some things as it is to carry other things, and unless we drop the things which should be dropped, we cannot carry the things which should be carried.

I will illustrate and give examples. Passion must give way to principle; appetite must give way to reason; imagination acting without calcu-

lation must give way to prudence; impulse must put itself under conscience; rashness must exchange places with caution; timidity and indecision must allow themselves to be supplanted by self-control and firmness. There must be earnest, serious thought, and large forecast, and a well-stored mind, and an enlightened conscience, and deep convictions, and the courage to stand by our principles at all hazard. True manhood and true womanhood have virtues that are all their own, and it should be our aim to reach these. But how are these to be reached? Only by the way the text points out: by passing through a true childhood, and by carrying into our manhood the best elements of that true childhood.

I want to set before your mind just here this fact, viz.: *it is Christianity that honors childhood and points out its worth and value.* It is Christ who proclaims that the child-heart is the door into the kingdom of heaven, and discovers the elements in childhood which should be present in the highest manhood. It is Jesus who lifts the little child into a grand type. He says to the world, "Dwell not on the trouble-and-care side of children—their thoughtlessness, which vexes, their constant need of attention, which wears; pass over to the other side and see them in the light of the land from which they came, and to which they can by God's grace lead back."

Look at the glory in their faces! See in them

the characteristics which woo and win human hearts, and which command and bless the human race! They carry in them the greatest amount of heavenliness possessed by mortals. It is as Wordsworth says:

“Heaven lies all around us in our infancy.”

Or, to use Matthew Arnold's words, “Children testify of a divine home felt, and fading away as life proceeds.” Whose heart has infancy ever injured? Into the tissue of whose life has it not with its pure hand woven some golden thread, some ray of joy, some heavenly tie? Everywhere it refines and strengthens the chain of human sympathy. A great writer has said, “Every Christian grace displays itself at some period in the infant of but a single year—faith and humility and truth and love.” Is that saying true? If so, it presents a wonderful fact; for the graces named in the saying, when tried and harmonized and matured, are the beautiful elements which compose the character of the perfect man. I am inclined to accept the saying, and I am inclined to accept it because it accords with the teaching of Christ when He lifts a little child in His arms and places it in the midst of His disciples, saying, “Mark, O My disciples, the infinite simplicity of the child's trusting and loving heart; for it is a revelation of the Spirit of the kingdom of heaven.”

The child whom Christ makes a grand type is

not the child that has been vitiated and corrupted by contact with bad men. It does not belong, of course, to the boys in your block. For what block is there that has not the very worst boys of the city? Its childhood is not the childhood in which is developed the old Adam or the young Cain. The childhood which Christ uses as a type is a holy childhood, and a holy childhood in its holiest mood, a childhood pure and simple, a childhood before it is touched by the world's artificiality, a childhood that is natural. When He says, "Become as a little child," He means us to become like a child that loves, and that rejoices in being loved; that is truthful and trustful; that shows itself as it is, and that counts upon others to be what they appear. It was in the spontaneous life of such a child that the holy eye, which sees lessons in the lilies and in the grasses and in the sparrows and in the clouds, saw types and models for His disciples.

I wish to dwell upon the fact that Christianity deals with childhood, and lifts the true child into a grand typology, and exalts childhood, and protects childhood, and honors childhood, and discerns in the essential attributes of childhood the elements of genuine and lasting greatness. Christianity is the symbol of advancement. It is the latest and highest progress of the world. Now what does the latest progress of the world's civilization do? It sets forth ideal childhood as the embodiment of goodness, and proclaims *that goodness is greatness*.

In this, Christian civilization is differentiated from the civilizations that precede it. Goodness has not always been considered greatness.

When the Magi of the East sought the King of Greatness they were taken to a little holy Child. But the world through all the ages prior to that had been going away from the Child. The world's notion of greatness lay in the opposite pole.

As we review the history of the world we see it dividing itself into *three stages*. *In the first stage power* is magnified, force is deified. The great man is the strong man. In that era Nimrod is the hero after the world's heart. Strength receives the homage of the many. *In the second stage power* is pushed a step or two into the background, and *intellect* comes to the front. The great man is the intellectual man. In that era Homer is the favored idol before whom the populace delights to bow. Genius receives the homage of men. *Christianity has inaugurated the third stage*. In this era the world is pointed, not to Nimrod, not to Homer, but to the *Child-Christ*. Not to power, not to genius, but to *goodness*. *The great man of the future will be the good man of the future*. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." "Except ye be converted and become like little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of greatness.

What seems strange, these three stages of the

world's history which I have mentioned are paralleled in the individual experience of man, as man admires the forces operating in the world. What causes the heart of the boy to respond in admiration? *David slaying Goliath—power.* Cæsar leading the Tenth Legion—*power.* Napoleon at the head of the Old Guard—*power.* Let the boy pass to young manhood. What causes his heart to respond in admiration while in the midst of young manhood? Shakespeare creating his wonderful characters—*genius.* Goethe throwing off the products of his facile pen—*genius.* Macaulay writing his world-renowned history—*genius.* Let the young man reach his full maturity, when he is able to weigh and analyze and judge after the highest and the most approved standards. What calls out admiration from the heart of the mature man? John Howard at work among the prisons practicing the doctrine of humaneness—*goodness.* Livingstone struggling in the thickets of the Dark Continent for the elevation of Africa—*goodness.* Abraham Lincoln writing the Emancipation Proclamation—*goodness.* Under the Christian dispensation we are taught to admire character, and genuine character has in it all the gentle graces of childhood.

The ethics of Christianity, when they were first proclaimed, fairly startled the world with their new doctrine, that to develop the grandest manhood *men must become as little children.* Other systems

of ethics gave, as models of the finest manhood, stoical firmness, bold indifference to circumstances, and the rougher and sterner virtues. With them the complete elimination of the child meant manhood. They never dreamed that the recognition of childhood was the best thermometer of the world's progress.

It is remarkable that the literature of the Dark Ages presents no model childhood. But see how troops of beautiful children crowd literature since the Dark Ages. It is the glory of Christianity's Book that the child is in it:—the little maid missionary in a foreign land pointing Naaman to the only source of healing in all the wide world; the boy-priest Samuel serving in the Tabernacle; the merchant lad with his two fishes and five barley loaves, in the exercise of a fine enterprise, selling out his entire stock on the spot; little Timothy, a small epitome of a man, at the knee of his mother and grandmother, drinking in Bible stories; the children in the Temple singing their hosannahs to the Son of David. These are the glory of Christianity's Book, and these show the high estimate which Christianity puts upon childhood.

I am anxious above all things that Christianity shall get its full credit for what it has done for childhood, and for the way it has blessed the world at large through its appreciation of the child.

You know how the child was treated before the days of Christ. In Sparta, and in some of the

Greek cities, in Rome, and among many savage tribes, it was the custom to destroy small and unhealthy children as soon as they were born. Christianity puts an end to that. It protects the feeblest human life by righteous legislation. Christianity weighs the child's soul. It honors its body, no matter how weak or defective it may be, because of the soul. How many men with giant minds and great hearts would have been lost to the world during the Christian era if the ancient ethics of Greece and Rome had prevailed! Byron was born with a club-foot; Spinoza was weak; Samuel Johnson was disfigured; Sir Isaac Newton was so small that he could have been put into a quart measure; Goethe and Victor Hugo were so weak that they were not expected to live; Charles Sumner weighed but three pounds and a half; Descartes, Gibbon, Kepler, Lord Nelson, Christopher Wren, James Watt, John Howard, Washington Irving, Wilberforce, and others of equal greatness, were all characterized by bodily weakness in infancy. Christianity came into the world and saved them from the fate that would have been theirs had they been born in the cities I have named, before the Christian era. They were saved because the voice of Jesus Christ had echoed round the world these merciful words concerning children: "It is not the will of your heavenly Father that the least of these little ones should perish."

But allow me to address myself to a practical

question, which is really the main question set before us by my topic. The question is: *What things should we carry out of our childhood into our manhood and womanhood?* I mean to give the rest of my sermon to the answer of this question.

1. *We should take into manhood and womanhood the inquiring mind.*

It is the characteristic of the child to ask questions. That should be the characteristic of men and women. A question is a chariot in which the soul may ride into truth. It is better to ask questions than it is to dogmatize. I do not mean that it is better to ask the questions of the agnostic, but the questions of an honest seeker after truth. Ask questions as Job asked them. There is no book in the Bible in which the interrogation point is so used as in the Book of Job; and no one, in dealing with the most difficult problems of life, ever came forth more grandly than Job did.

In asking questions, be children. I came across a little book last week which was given up wholly to keeping a record of "Questions Asked by Children." These were some of the questions that fell from little lips: A certain mother had made a disparaging remark about her neighbor. It chanced that the neighbor called that very day, and the smart infant of the Bay State put this question to its mother: "Mamma, is this the Mrs. B. you take no stock in?" A little boy, after a

visit to his grandfather's, where there was always a blessing sought at meals, asked his father, "Papa, why don't you talk to your plate as grandpa talks to his every dinner-time?" The father understood the question and felt the rebuke. The questions in the book run from questions like these up to the most serious questions possible—questions pertaining to God and heaven, and to death, and to the state after death. Like the child, fill life full of questions. But do not let faith die into cold questions or into colder indifferentism; let your questions be questions that are burning-hot with a desire after true knowledge. While you are in the universe you are in your Father's house, and questions in your Father's house concerning God and His communications to men are no more out of place, and should no more interfere with your right relations to God, than the questions which your child asks in your home are out of place or interfere with its relation to you. Interrogate, then. Interrogate the rocks. Interrogate the stars. Interrogate the elements and forces in their mighty play. Study man. Study the Bible. Study God. "Prove all things." This will only exalt the power and love and faithfulness of God, who is back of all nature and who is in the Book. The grandest thing in this advanced nineteenth century of ours is the prevailing spirit of honest inquiry.

2. *We should carry into manhood and womanhood the transparency and simplicity of childhood.*

The artlessness and the openness of the child is refreshing. The child may be a little sinner, but he is a transparent little sinner, and his transparency is an item that should be put to his credit. One illustration will be sufficient. An aunt was visiting the home of one of Brooklyn's little citizens, and she made herself welcome by bringing with her an ample supply of sweets. The mother of the lad came to feel that he made too many draughts upon the aunt's generosity, and forbade him asking for a single atom more. This prohibition was a barrier which must in some way be surmounted, and the little fellow most guilelessly betrayed a guileful plan of procedure by interpolating it in his recital of the Lord's Prayer. He rattled the prayer off with breathless haste: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and I'll just ask auntie for some candy for grandpa, and he will say, 'No, I thank thee,' and then I'll have it for myself; and forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors; for I must go and ask her right away; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine the kingdom, power, glory, and I am going right away. Amen."

That was not right. No. But it was a great deal better than some of the plans which you carry out and subtilely concoct and cover up. If all sin were as transparent as that, it would be an easy matter to defeat sin. There is a great difference

between the child-heart and the heart sophisticated by life. The latter is able to give a deadliness to evil. Deplore and guard against the influences that change the outspoken, artless child into the man who wears a mask and cultivates a silence that lies and deceives. The speech that is the sincerest in this world is that which is nearest to a prattling voice. Oh that we could see through our fellow-men! Oh that their lives were so pure and holy and good-intentioned that they could afford to live in the sunshine and allow men to look them through and through! Oh that men were what they pretend to be! Transparency! Sincerity! That is what mankind needs.

3. *We should carry with us into our manhood and womanhood the sense of the goodness of existence and the ability to enjoy life.*

Life is a real pleasure to a child. It lives as a striking contrast and as a rebuke in the midst of the men and women who have completely flattened out; who spend their time pottering over trivialities, enjoying nothing and entering with heartiness into nothing; who are tired of life and are prematurely old because they have no mental resources to fall back upon. Take a child with his "Robinson Crusoe" and "Arabian Nights," his bat and ball, his trumpet and drum, his fishing-rod and gun, his kite and top, and life is a real relish to him. Such a child is always facing the sun, so that his shadows of course fall behind him and out

of sight. His heart is care-free. He is confident of being cared for. He might distrust his father and mother and have grief on this account, but he does not. Such a child not only enjoys his play and his growth, but he enjoys his sleep. It is not more than a moment from "good-night, mamma," to "good-morning, mamma"; and the new day always blossoms out in original freshness and sparkle. We should guard this ability to enjoy things which God gives us in childhood. And it can be guarded. We should cultivate this sense of the goodness of life. And it can be cultivated. By putting the right things into life we can make life enjoyable—right principles, right theories, right pursuits, right relations with God and with our fellow-men. These things can give men and women more happiness than toys give children. This is what the experience of some men declare. Take Hans Christian Andersen, that man who wrote so many wonderful children's stories, and who kept himself all his life in fellowship with the little ones. He tells us that his life was as happy as a child's. His own words are: "My life is a living story, happy and full of incident. It says to the world and to me, 'There is a God, who directs all things for the best.'"

4. *We should take with us into our manhood and womanhood the large and beautiful faith-faculty of our childhood.*

There is nothing in the child that is grander

than its faith. It goes through childhood believing, and according to its faith so does it receive. By faith the little child sleeps on God's heart and is refreshed; by faith it puts its hand into God's hand, and is led and upheld. Every day we see how the unquestioning faith of the child brings it that which it wants and seeks. It believes, and those around it honor its belief. In the history of the fine arts we read that a little child on the streets of Florence watched for the coming of Michael Angelo, who was on his way to his studio. The child brought with it a large sheet of paper, for it intended to ask the artist to draw it a picture, and it firmly believed that he would. That was a bold faith. Angelo, the man who combined in one soul painter, sculptor, architect, and poet, was in the zenith of his glory. Popes had pleaded with him for the fruits of his genius, and kings had offered him vast sums for a single work of art. The child's faith in asking him for a picture was daring faith; but it won the day. It went right to the heart of the artist. He could not disappoint such open and sincere trust and expectation. Sitting down on the side of the street, he drew a sketch there and then, such as no other hand in all the world could have produced. That was what the child expected and believed he would do. This incident teaches us that if we only exercised faith in our fellow-men, we could reach the heart of our fellow-men, and

would receive from them the very best they have to give. Very few men have the heart to cheat or injure the man who implicitly trusts them. Our open dealing with men and our magnanimous trust in them can and will prove educational. It will lead to openness and trust in their dealing with us. One open and trusting man will make a hundred other men such as he is. This freedom from suspicion, this implicit trust of childhood, is what society needs. What a state of society it has the ability to inaugurate! I believe that a childlike faith in man has in it a power that can regenerate and purify human society.

The faith of childhood must be exercised especially in our dealing with God. We who are grown men and women want to learn to cradle ourselves in God. When we do this, then we shall find the truth of that beautiful promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." A noted Bible expositor uses Abraham as an illustration of the truth of this promise. Abraham with the faith of a little child nestled in the very heart of God, and so became the father of the faithful. He fed himself upon the divine life and love. God took him out one night and showed him all the visible hosts of heaven, and then said to this childless wanderer, "Even so shall thy seed be." What followed? Abraham, no longer the mighty chief and audacious explorer of unknown lands, no longer the owner of count-

less flocks and riches of an Eastern kind, became as a little child. "Abraham believed God." The first time the word "believe" occurs in the Bible is in this instance: "Abraham believed God." He said to sight, "Stand back." He said to the laws of nature, "Hold your peace." He said to a mis-giving heart, "Silence, thou deceiving tempter." "Abraham believed God." How much there is in that word "believe" as in this instance it is first written! Abraham nestled in the heart of God, and nurtured and fed himself upon the divine vitality. Such is the meaning of the word "believe." Abraham's faith was childlike.

See the power of faith! It gives a man the sense of sonship. "To as many as believe, to them He gives the power to become the sons of God." And that is a wonderful privilege; for sonship carries in it the Father-idea. The Father-idea makes us feel that we are never alone. "I am not alone, for the Father is with Me." The idea of sonship which is always joined with the Father-idea places us on the side of things on which God is. If all this be true, then how much grows out of carrying the faith-faculty of childhood with us throughout our entire life!

I have no time further to particularize. I can only group what remains to be presented. We should carry with us into manhood and womanhood childhood's sympathy, childhood's heart, childhood's love, childhood's hope, childhood's

aspirations, childhood's enterprise, childhood's enthusiasm, and childhood's freshness. Let us be honest, and let us fear not to proclaim the unvarnished truth. What is the unvarnished truth? The unvarnished truth is this, viz. : it is the spirit and the boldness and the out-push and on-push of youth that keeps the world agoing, and the church agoing, and the man agoing; therefore, if we are to be useful and be a help in the world, and not in the way, serving the world only by our funeral, our silver locks must often mingle with golden locks, and we must in middle life and in old age be young in heart, and young in hope, and young in our plans, and young in our enthusiasm.

I have spoken large things; I have enumerated large duties. I wish in closing to speak one word by way of encouragement. It is this: What I have urged has been realized by others. Lowell, in his essay on Emerson, says: "One secret of his greatness was, he tenaciously maintained himself in the outputs of his youth—i.e., he held on to the best of his boy-days."

Childhood has been carried into manhood. Mature lives have been filled with splendid sanguineness. Men have reached the highest dreams and ambitions of their boy-days. Moses is an illustration of this. His mother during his boyhood days gave him character and an inspiration and a patriotic plan, and put within him an impulse which he never forgot. She gave him a

mission as a boy to shake the very throne of the tyrannical Pharaoh, and when he became a man he shook that throne until he almost shattered it. The early dream of his life was that he might make a free nation out of God's covenant people, and in mature manhood he translated his dream from dream to glorious fact. In Moses, childhood marched on into manhood.

But we have a brighter example even than Moses. It is Jesus Himself. I have spoken of the importance of carrying the faith-faculty of childhood into manhood. Jesus shows us that this can be done. He did it. Nothing shone out brighter in His life than His radiant faith in His Father. And this was the child-quality in Christ. Amid all His wisdom and truth and the exercise of His wonderful power, His faith shone. His faith began in childhood and continued to the very end. His faith was faith in God as a Father. The first recorded sentence that Jesus spoke called God His Father, and His last recorded sentence on the cross called God His Father. It was by the faith of His childhood that He offered Himself the sacrifice for sin upon the cross. "To be about His Father's business," that was the grandest thing in His childhood, and that He made the chief business of His manhood. In Him, as a Tree of Life, the blossom fruited.

Just as our manhood tinges and colors our immortality, just as we carry over the line between

time and eternity our faith and our hope and our charity—three graces which Paul says are eternal and abide with us forever—in like manner we can here on earth see to it that the golden flush of childhood shall radiate through our maturity, and give beauty to our manly integrity and strength, and give permanency to our mature nobleness and power. Occupying a high position in the kingdom of heaven depends upon our seeing to this.

The kingdom of heaven! There is no greater motive power that can be brought to bear upon us as an inspiration to duty. The kingdom of heaven! O my soul, when that is at stake thou must be true to it, and thou must be true also to thyself.



X.

RESULTS OF COMMUNION WITH GOD.



## X.

### RESULTS OF COMMUNION WITH GOD.

*"And Moses was with the Lord forty days and forty nights; . . . and Moses' face shone while he talked with Him."*—EXODUS 34: 29.

WHILE the story of Moses is real history, it has in it a charm away beyond that of any romance. From the ark of bulrushes on the Nile to the hidden grave somewhere in the altitudes of Nebo, one thrilling incident gives way to another incident just as thrilling. His is the greatest name of all antiquity. He was sublimely magnificent for personal purity, for grandeur of conception, and for wisdom of judgment. He made great everything he touched. There are higher mountain-peaks in the world than those of Sinai—peaks crested with deeper snow; peaks with double its beetling crags; peaks thunder-riven and storm-scarred a thousand times beyond it. Why does Sinai tower above these on the page of history? Moses made his home there in the heart of its solitudes, and brought from thence the deep things of God, and this is

the reason. Out from the deepest crevice of its cloud-covered summit came forth this man of God with a shining face, a pictorial person, his arms burdened with *The Decalogue*, God's richest gift to the men of old. He not only made Sinai great, he made the Hebrew nation great. He so stamped himself upon the Hebrew people that even to-day, after the cruel wanderings of centuries without king and without country, they are unmistakably a separated and distinct people. "The birthmark of the Hebrew Moses is ineffaceable."

It is in connection with his gift of *The Decalogue* to the world that he is introduced by the text. Fresh from the mountain of God, he stands before us in the glory of a spiritual transfiguration. What transfigured the man? Answer this question for us and you will give us the grand secret of his grand life. Communion with God: that was what transfigured him, and broadened him, and gave him power, and enlightened his intellect, and wrought in him the miracle of purity, and made him "*a Fire-Pillar* in Israel." The best parts of his human nature were fed and sustained by the manna of the Promised Land, and his love was purgated by the higher lights of heaven.

My fellow-men, as Moses stands before us with his shining face, he is a spiritual and refined image of the highest dream of aspiring humanity. We want to be just like him. This incident in his life links itself to an incident which ought to be pos-

sible, and which I believe is possible, in our life. As he was with God in Sinai, so we may be with God in the sacramental room, and from this room we may go forth with a transfigured purpose which may work itself into a transfigured life. I believe that there is in every Christian a divine something which, when it fully develops, becomes a transfiguration, a shining light, a golden mosaic of moral splendors. The life of Moses was the life of a man beautifully growing away from all selfishness and tapering off toward God. And in this I believe our life may be like his.

It is a great blessing for us to have an ideal human life such as this life. I am glad to have God as an example and Christ as an example, but I am just as glad to have Moses and Paul and John. They are nearer to me than God and Christ. They serve for me a purpose which God and Christ do not. They are greatness and success rising right out of infirmity and sin like my own. They show me how near like God and Christ I can become. God and Christ as ideals frighten me; but when in Moses and Paul and John I behold how much of God and Christ a sinful man can incarnate, I take courage and press on to the goal of Christ-likeness. There is a tremendous inspiration in one good man. His hand is the hand of God taking hold of his fellow-man and lifting him up. God is not jealous of him; Christ is not jealous of him. God and Christ are in him and are working

through him. Moses brings just so much of God down from the mountain into the midst of Israel. Christ lives anew in Paul. It is God's glory that shines in Moses' face. It is Christ's brain that writes its thoughts by Paul's pen. When we commune with them we are communing with God. They are sunbeams from the Sun of Righteousness, and as pencils of holy light they will beautify our character with spiritual beauties, just as the rays of the natural sun beautify the spring flower with those splendors which are braided into every beam of light.

While we are thus to value, and do value, the men of God—such as the minister of the gospel, who brings us the Word of God freshened and vitalized by his faith and experience and earnestness and personality; and the Sabbath-school teacher, who studies for us and prays for us, and who leads us over the pages of the Bible and wins us to Christ by fidelity and sympathy and example; and the devout friend, who lives so near to God in his daily life that he is an enlightened conscience to us, an interpreter of God, and a prized representative of God, a living epistle of God to us—while we value the men of God, still there is God and there is Christ, and we need them also. We need them with a supreme need. We must all deal with God and Christ directly and personally, each one for himself, and each one for herself. We want Paul *plus* Paul's Christ. We want

Moses *plus* Moses' God. Our souls cry out for God, the living God. We must have what Moses had and what Paul had—communion with God. It was fellowship with God that made these men. It was God in their life that made them great, and God in any life will make it great. Oh that men were wise and that they understood this! Oh that they would study what God brings with Him into a human life! Oh that they would look at the ten thousand failures among the men who walk our streets—men of high natural endowments, men who might be great, but who are not great because they have not asked God to permit them to be great, or to help them to be great. I have lived long enough to learn that no man in this world can succeed, with a success that is worth having, unless he get permission from God to succeed. You man, living indifferently with regard to God's will and God's Church and God's day and God's people, do you call your life a success? Are you proud of your nature and of your growth? If you are, your friends are not. Are you a Moses? Are you a Paul? I am here to affirm it as the verdict of the ages that the only broad life and the only grand life is the life that is lived in constant fellowship with God. All other type of life is ill-shaped and narrow, and a thing for which we must constantly offer apologies. It is not a rich gem into which we can let the sunlight pour and get it back flashing in colors which charm and thrill. A life apart

from God is a life of flesh and sin, and a life of flesh and sin always contracts and narrows and paralyzes. It soon locks a man up so that he can undertake nothing grand and do nothing grand. The children of Israel by following such a life actually lost forty precious years, and the whole generation died within sight of Canaan, which they had not the pluck nor the ability to take. They were sin-fettered.

There is a very strange story in Fox's "Book of Martyrs" which serves me here. It is told of one of the Protestant martyrs who saw his brethren put to death by burning. He was reserved for a more ingenious torment. He was placed in a luxurious chamber and left to himself all day, with the choicest of food to eat and the best of wine to drink. He was not able for a long time to understand what this could mean. This was very far from torment. But after a while the thought struck him that the walls were coming nearer together. To assure himself, he measured the distance between them. After a few days he measured the distance again, and to his utmost horror he found that that was actually his torture—the walls coming nearer and nearer. In a few days the room was a cell; in a few days more it was a terrible vise; in a few days more it was the narrowest possible coffin, no wider than a knife-blade. The man was crushed as thin as a sheet of paper. This is a picture of what a life of sin

and godlessness does with the manhood and the grand natural powers of the sinner. Such a life tightens around a man like a vise, and crushes him into imbecility and narrowness and nothingness.

Opposite this type of life I now put the life lived in fellowship with God—a life which expands and beautifully ripens and becomes luminous; a life after the pattern of the sublime life of Moses.

We are to think for a little while of what we receive from our fellowship with God. *We do receive.* Let us get hold of that fact. There are results, and these are grand. *What are these results?* In answering this question I take my answers from the story of Moses, the great pictorial, shining personality of the Old Testament. I shall only speak long enough to point out three results.

The first result of communion with God which I mention is:

1. *Accumulated knowledge.*

This was the resultant of Moses' communion with God. He himself is our witness. He has large knowledge, but he does not take the credit of it to himself. He was an educated man. He was a graduate of the Oxford of ancient Egypt. He studied mathematics and astronomy and chemistry under the experts of the day. He was versed in literature. He could read the hieroglyphics. The Obelisk which stands in Central Park, New York,

stood in front of the very temple where he studied, and no doubt he often read that writing on it, which is sealed to us.

While he was finely educated, he does not attribute his superior knowledge and his insight into divine things to his secular education; he attributes these to God. He declares that the wonderful things which he uttered and which he wrote he received from God during the hours of his communion with Him while alone with Him in the Mount.

I have not time to analyze his knowledge or present it in its fullness. You have it in the opening of the Bible. Let me select only a specimen or two. Read the closing words of the Book of Deuteronomy. The words of blessing which you find there are fit to be put side by side with the Beatitudes of Jesus with which He opens his wonderful Sermon on the Mount. Read the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy. It is one of the sublimest human compositions on record. It was Moses' swan song. It is the storehouse from which later Scripture-writers draw plentifully. It has been called the Magna Charta of Prophecy. Take one figure as an illustration of its beauty and charm—the figure of God as He trains His people and leads them from one high thing to another, until they reach the full mastery of themselves and climb to the heights of their being. He compares the Eternal in this leading to the

mother eagle teaching its young to climb the unaccustomed steeps of the atmosphere until they are able to reach at will, and at any time, the highest point of the blue dome; until they are able to pierce even the fiercest storm, and, while the elements are emitting their firebolts below and sending their thunders shrieking over the hill-tops of earth, bask in the calm above the storm and look the sun full in the face.

The most noted embodiment of knowledge which Moses has left us is *The Decalogue*. In it we have a positive masterpiece which men have never been able to improve. Can you put your critical finger upon a single weak word in it? Or can you cite a single line that is wanting in intellectuality or in moral dignity? To trifle with a single commandment would be to injure one's self and to jeopardize society. These Ten Commandments know us in the totality of nature, and we can only escape from them by telling lies to our souls. They are rooted, every one of them, in our constitution. They give us a right view of God, and a right view of our fellow-man, and a right view of self, and a right view of duty. Ah, that word "*duty*" is where we stumble. We do not by nature like the word "*duty*," so we are prejudiced against the Ten Commandments. We ask, in a tone of depreciation, What is this law from heaven? Is there any grace in it? Is there any touch of love? Is there any trembling of pathos?

Is it not all hard iron? Is it not all tremendous exaction? Is it not simply a pitiless, tyrannous claim? We hate the word "*duty*," therefore we hate also the very name of "*law*." Duty! Duty! Why, duty is the grandest thing to which any man can be called. When faithfully met it carries in it the crown of eternal life. Our questions show that we are not just to the innermost meaning of the Ten Commandments. If they were kept, would they not sweeten society? Would they not watch over human life with ineffable tenderness? If every one kept the Ten Commandments according to their spirit and letter, human society would be free from all evil and full of all good. Communion with God helps us to read aright the commandments of God, and enables us to keep company with their inner and deeper meaning. By communion with God we reach God's mind relative to *The Decalogue* and all truth. We understand what duty is, what truth is, what love is, and what is the ultimatum of the good and of the bad.

The second result of communion with God which I mention is:

2. *Inspiring visions.*

No life had more sublime visions in it than the beautiful and strong life of Moses, the man of God. If you took his visions away from him you would wholly unmake his life. There was a time in his work when he almost decided to give up his task

and surrender to what seemed to him to be the inevitable. The people whom he tried to lead into the Land of Promise kept sinning so persistently, that he concluded he could make nothing of them. He said to himself, "I might as well give up now, for I shall have to give up by and by." But did he give up? No. Why? God strengthened him by a vision. He had said to himself, "These people, by their repeated backsliding and sin, will some day so provoke God that He will blot them out of existence." So God came to him and gave him a vision. He hid Moses in the cleft of a mighty rock while He passed by him in His glory, and as He passed by He proclaimed His name: "I am the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Standing before the vision of these magnificent attributes of God, the discouraged Moses said, "If this be the disposition of God toward sinning man, if this be the way He forgives and forgives and forgives, I will still hold on to sinning Israel." And he started forth again in his leadership with a new zeal. What would have been the result if that vision had not come? The whole future trembled in the balance: the Promised Land, the Kingdom, the coming kings and prophets, the writers of the Bible, the Messiah, the cross, the Gospel, and great Christendom itself. Let the vision fail to come, and down goes the

discouraged Moses, and with him this magnificent train. But Moses entered during the hour of his discouragement into communion with God, and saw God, and became like God. Filled with God's tender and forgiving spirit, he reached forth the hand of compassion to the children of Israel.

Mountain-tops were frequent in the life of Moses, hence he saw a great way onward. From the summit of Sinai he saw the heights and the depths of the Law; and from the summit of Pisgah he saw Lebanon, and Hermon, and Mount Zion, and the Jordan. He saw right into the heart of the Promised Land. These visions made him pure, and ambitious for the right, and enterprising, and full of hope; and enabled him to die confident that the future of his cause, which was God's cause, would be all-glorious.

As the seer of visions, Moses was not only the lawgiver of Israel, he was also the poet of Israel. The true poet is always a mountain-top man. And the true poet always has a mission among men. It is his mission to idealize the real, and beautify and glorify the commonplace in life. It is his place to soar for his fellow-men; to commune with God for his fellow-men; to see visions for his fellow-men; to be an inspiration to men; and to teach men how to see the best in things and persons. It is his to sway other men's minds as the storm sways the tree-tops. He points out the spiritual side of the facts of life. He takes man,

chained to sense, choked by scientific sappers, helplessly entangled in plodding cares, crushed by gold and silver, stunted under the shadow of the warehouse and palace, and breaks his chain. He lifts him into clear air, shows the divine side of care, interprets sorrow, anchors the soul in God, and throws about the simplest act an eternal significance. We lose our visions; we vulgarize life. The poet by his visions brings back our ideals. He shows man to be better than he seems, nature to be more tolerant and kind, and God more merciful. To idealize the streets, and the fields, and the sea, and the mountains, and the rivers; to lift business out of the ruts and give it its divine interpretation; to find music in the clattering wheels of the factory; to take vulgarity out of the home, and transfigure the humblest duty, until passion becomes patience and love and self-denial—is to do humanity an immeasurable good.

This is the order of things in our communion with God. From God we get knowledge, and out of the knowledge which we get from God we grow visions. Knowledge is like the acorn which we hold in our hand; our vision is the possible oak. For example, we know the blessings which God gives to His own children; let us climb to the heights of ourselves, and by a consecrated imagination let us see these blessings worked out in our own individual life. Let us forecast our future selves what we should like to be, and then with all

our might let us work toward our forecast. In the presence of God's love, and in the light of His countenance, we ought to be able to see what is possible to us as His children. This communion Sabbath should bring us all new desires for better lives, and for attainments not yet reached, and for sweeter dispositions, and for purer motives, and for nobler deeds; in this sacred presence we should all see better things ahead of us.

The third result of communion with God which I mention is:

3. *Assimilation to the image of God.*

Knowledge received from communion with God when applied to life becomes ideals and visions to us; these visions and ideals, worked toward and finally reached by us, become a holy incarnation, a personal transformation, a beautification of our soul and life and character. A holy incarnation, a transformed personality, a beautiful soul and life and character—these constitute the image of God in us.

We are assimilated to the image of God in a twofold way.

*First, by an outward influence:* i.e., by living in an atmosphere surcharged with God's influence; by associating with God-like men. These holy men impress themselves upon us, and we grow like them, and like God because they are like God. We all know the molding power of surroundings. The child in the home is an illustra-

tion. It soon takes on the family character, and becomes the facsimile of father or mother. All things in the home have an influence upon it—the touch of human hands, the sound of human voices, and after a while the mysterious light of human eyes, when the child begins to take notice. This home influence is mightier than we imagine, and it begins earlier than we dream.

The biographer of Lady Willoughby tells this story pertaining to her mother-life. She was standing at her window-casement one day looking out upon the lawn, and in her arms was her infant child. The deer were playing on the green, and the birds were singing in the trees, and the sun was hanging in the deep blue of a July sky. And the face of her little child in the midst of all this was shining like the face of an angel. Just then a servant of the household who had disobeyed came into the lady's presence, and Lady Willoughby began to scold her. While the scowl and shadow of that dark passion called anger was on her face, she suddenly looked down at her child, and was startled. What startled her? She saw that passion of anger reflected on its little countenance, sinking down into the depths of the child's existence, and twining itself around the very roots of its being. Being a Christian mother, she said to herself, "This is wrong. My babe, instead of beholding in my face, as a living mirror, the glory of the Lord, and being changed into the likeness

of that by the Spirit of the Lord, is beholding the scowl and shadow of that dark passion, anger, and is being changed into the likeness of that." Human nature is marvelously susceptible to the human influences in the midst of which it is placed. Hence we must look after our human associations, and keep ourselves in constant touch with God-people. We must people our hours with lovely presences which refine. We must be companions only of those who fear and love God. Timothy must live with Paul and let Paul make him. Ruth must live with Naomi and let Naomi make her. Joshua must live with Moses and let Moses make him.

The second way in which we are assimilated to the image of God is *by the inward forces which work in our soul outward*. These inward forces are the thoughts we think, the principles we hold, the purposes we cherish, the volitions of our will, the dictates of our conscience, and the loves which we allow to sway us. If these are God-like they make us God-like. That we may bear the image of God, God must be enthroned in the soul, and we must regulate our secret soul-life by His holy will. We must think as He thinks, and love as He loves, and act as He acts. Our soul and God must be in sweet accord. The state of the soul is everything. If as a die it carries in it the image of God, it will stamp that image not only upon our whole personality, but on everything we do and say and advocate.

What strikes us particularly in this story of Moses is the fact that his illumined soul so shines that its brightness irradiates his whole form and flashes in his countenance. His body becomes transparent and is like a crystal lobe around an electric light. His communion with God made him a man with a solar face. It gave him facial beauty. His very body was a partaker of his transfiguration and carried the marks of God. And strange as this may strike us at first thought, it is nevertheless according to the operation of the laws of nature. Our thoughts and our loves are chisels working upon our faces, keeping them smooth, or else cutting into them lines that are expressive.

You know the power of the intellect in molding the face. Elevating thoughts remove the marks of sensuality and replace them by a fineness of lofty self-control. There is not a virtue which, if continually exercised, will not refine and leave a new fairness upon the features. You know what the play of passion will do. Take the passion of a noble love. It always gives facial loveliness. It irradiates a man as the sun does the earth. It gives one an opulence of personal magnetism. When this love is the love of God, it is the greatest of all known powers. There is no person, if he has the love of God in his soul, but will shine with a divine outward beauty. We saw this illustrated last winter by the missionary who told us of the progress of the gospel among the wild

Indians of the extreme West. He threw upon the screen life-size pictures of the Indian children as they were when they entered the Christian school, and then he threw upon the screen pictures of these very same children after they had been with Christ and His people for five and six years. The pictures revealed to us that they had passed through a literal transfiguration. The very features of their faces were converted to Jesus Christ and partook of His glory. Those pictures taught us that if we sought simply physical beautification it would pay us to live with God and for God. Keep holy the emotions, think exaltedly, feel deeply and purely, and live continently. The divinity within shapes the divinity without. The soul is the cardinal beautifier.

The greatest chemical agency in the known world is holy love. It celestializes the face of a man. It haloed the countenance of Moses; and from his day to this, all nations, when they would represent men as possessed of extraordinary sanctity, or as enjoying large and familiar intercourse with God, do so by throwing a lucid *nimbus* or circle of glory around their heads.

Do you ask, "Why am not I a luminous person as was Moses? I love God. I commune with God"! The answer to your question is, There is a large difference between the degree of your love and his. There is a difference also in the quality, intenseness, and continuance of your communion

with God and his. Forty days and forty nights in uninterrupted communion with God in the mount! Were you ever that long in communion with God? The effects are not wrought in you which were wrought in Moses because the causes are not at work in you which were at work in him. The image of God in and on you is exactly proportionated to your efforts after the image of God. Causes and effects always correspond. If you make a certain number of vibrations in the air you will have sound; increase the vibrations and you will have light. As is the cause so is the effect. Follow God moderately and you will be a fairly reputable man; you will have a name sounding fairly well, as respectability is gauged and defined by the world; but follow the Lord fully and completely as the supreme thing of your life, and you will be a luminous leader of your fellow-men, and a Christ-power enlightening human conscience. Bring into your life in larger measure the things which Moses brought into his life, and you will be more of a Moses.

I have only one thought to present in closing, and that is this:

*God and man have been made one by Jesus Christ, and so fellowship with God is possible to all who love Jesus and put their trust in Him.*

And, my fellow-men, the last needed act of Jesus which consummated the unity, and bridged the chasm between God and man, was that act of

His which we celebrate to-day in the Sacramental Supper, viz., *His death on the cross*. It was as He died that He cried, "*It is finished*." His gracious words, His wondrous works, all contribute to bridging the distance between God and man, but it was not until He offered Himself a sacrifice upon the cross that the way was completed between heaven and earth and that both worlds heard the shout of the Son of God.

On the 10th of May, 1869, at a place called Promontory Point, the junction was made completing the railway communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. A silver spike was brought by the Governor of Arizona and another was contributed by the citizens of Nevada. They were driven home into a sleeper of California laurel with a silver mallet. As the last blow was struck the hammer was brought into contact with a telegraph wire, and the news was flashed simultaneously to the shores of the two great oceans, and was enthusiastically received throughout the vast continent by the roar of cannon and the chiming of bells. When the awful abyss between God and man had to be bridged, the deepest chasm was covered by the outstretched arms of the Son of God; and as the cruel spikes crashed through His open palms and transfixed Him to the cross, He cried, "*It is finished*;" and swifter than electric currents, or the lightning flash, the tidings were winged to the

uttermost parts of the two worlds united, heaven and earth. Over the new and the living way God has come to-day to greet us each one, and hold communion with us, and communicate His glory to us. Let us come to His table as Moses climbed the mount, that we may receive from Him the communications of His grace, and then let us go to our homes and to our daily avocations with shining faces.

Lord, Thou hast given us the communion ; grant now, we beseech Thee, the shining face. May we go down from Thy table to build up a shining character and live a shining life. As Moses came down from the mount bearing in his arms the Decalogue, may we go down from Thy table bearing with us some word of Thine : even the words of the Master Himself, " Ye are the light of the world : let your light so shine, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven."



XI.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHRIST THE OLD  
TESTAMENT SHEKINAH.



## XI.

### THE NEW TESTAMENT CHRIST THE OLD TESTAMENT SHEKINAH.

*"And the Glory of the Lord shone round about them."*—LUKE 2:9.

ALL Christendom is on a pilgrimage to a hamlet called Bethlehem. Bethlehem is crowded to-day with living souls, because it is a place of wonderful and far-reaching facts, and because it holds the cradle of the Christ-Child. From it many lines of Christology diverge, and these are all different and beautiful and interesting. Around no one spot has God's Book thrown greater interest. It makes it the center of stories full of witchery and thrill. These stories show that no sooner was Jesus born than He stirred the world far and near. The coming of the Son of God, from the bosom of His heavenly Father to the bosom of His earthly mother, moved the universe. A new star loomed in the sky, and guided a cavalcade of wise men from far-away lands, moving amid the tinkling bells of camels, to the place where the young

Child lay. The angels saw Jehovah in a fresh field of splendid display, and followed Him to the earth, and announced His presence and sang His praise. Shepherds, watching their flocks on Christmas night, saw wonders in the heaven, and heard audible voices, and caught strains from the harps of gold. These wonders which cluster around the Nativity, and which Faber calls "the Hierarchy of the Incarnation," are the things which rule our thoughts to-day. We can no more imagine the Nativity without these thrilling events, than we can imagine the evening without its twilight; or the sun without its clouds of silver and gold; or the morning without its glittering dewdrops. They are the poetic adornments of the Nativity, as well as the historic facts which give reality to the Incarnation.

Among all the beautiful stories connected with the origin of our faith, we know of none that excels the story of THE GLORY-LIGHT, which threw a sunburst into the heart of midnight, and made the plains of Bethlehem flash with splendor. It is the briefest of all the stories. It is told in a part of a sentence. It is only a parenthesis from one of the sentences in the story of the shepherds: "And THE GLORY OF THE LORD shone round about them." Although it is a story in a single phrase, it contains a volume of revelation concerning Jesus Christ. It carries in it, in condensed form, much of that which is grand and magnificent in the Old

Testament. Wrapped up in it is the history of the Shekinah; for "THE GLORY OF THE LORD" which shone at Bethlehem is none other than this. Again and again in the Old Testament the Shekinah is called "THE GLORY OF THE LORD." Hence we read: "THE GLORY OF THE LORD shone out of the pillar of cloud and fire"; "THE GLORY OF THE LORD rested over the tabernacle"; "THE GLORY OF THE LORD filled the temple."

The Babe in the manger is the Shekinah of God, and this is the reason the angels sing, and the glory shines. The story of THE GLORY-LIGHT when rightly developed and fully told has a wide sweep. It teaches what the Nativity brings us. It gives honor to the humiliation of the Son of God, and declares the majesty of the Incarnation. It throws a golden haze over a golden picture. It indicates that you cannot find Christ, anywhere in this Book, separated from the evidences of His deity. Is He on the cross dying as a criminal? His divine power convulses nature. Is He in the feed-trough of the cattle? His divine glory lights up the skies. Because He is the Son of God, the story of THE GLORY-LIGHT is one of the most natural parts of His history.

But what are we to think of this light which the shepherds saw? Was it the Shekinah on its way to inhabit the Christ-Child, so that it might be said, "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the

Godhead bodily"? Or was it the deity that was in Him already, as the Incarnate Son of God, throwing out a manifestation of itself from the manger in a mysterious and God-like way? It was the latter.

Do you object because of the distance between the manger and the plain? That was no distance for Him to throw His glory. On an after-occasion Jesus threw His indwelling splendor all the way from heaven to earth, and filled the road to Damascus with a brightness that made the light of the midday sun sickly and pale.

This is the fearless and safe position to take, for it is antipodal and counteractive to that taken by rationalists, who, by their naturalisms, evaporate into myths these thrilling things of the Nativity. Above all, this is the Scriptural position, as we will see in the progress of our thought.

In taking up the story of THE GLORY-LIGHT as told at Bethlehem, we do not mean to tie ourselves to it as to a mere fact which any historian might record; we mean to look at it in its broad relations and suggestions, that we may get from it some of those grand Christic realities which will give new life and power to our faith in Christ and to our worship of Christ. Feeding upon bare facts and letting the great doctrines and lessons contained in them fall to the ground, is passing through the golden grain-fields of truth and plucking ears and then rubbing out the wheat and eating

the chaff. Historical facts are only the shells that inclose the spiritual meat.

God does not mean to tie us to the cradle of the Christ-Child and keep us there. He gives us permission to bound out into the history of the Christ-Man. The mother stands by the crib of her babe, but she is not tied to the crib. Bodily she is there, but mentally she is not. Like Hannah by the side of her little Samuel, her thoughts run into the past and then into the future. She recalls how she prayed him into the world, and she builds up for him a future ideal life and character. The cradle of her babe is an ark, and in it she sails to far lands. This is what God intends she shall do. Even so God intends that when we visit the cradle of the Christ-Child, we, like her, shall give free range and outlet to our souls. Swing out, O my soul, swing out, and explore the glories of thy Redeemer born in Bethlehem! Recognize this fact, that from Bethlehem gates open outward on four sides, north and south and east and west, into all spheres of thought and truth; just as in the celestial city of John, gates in all the walls open inward to spheres of light and glory. Swing out, and gather to thyself some of the great thoughts and grand lessons belonging to this period of joy!

In the study of this Christmas theme we hope to fill up the following outline: Watch the play of the Shekinah in its conspicuous appearances of the Old Testament; identify Christ of Bethlehem,

the Son of God, with the Shekinah; set forth some of the facts concerning Christ revealed or emphasized by the Shekinah.

I. *We are to talk of the play of the Shekinah in the conspicuous appearances of the Old Testament.*

But why go back to the Old Testament and deal with the pictorial Christ when we have the real Christ? For this reason: *that we may have both.* Two are better than one. But are not the typical pictures of Christ mere rubbish now that we own Christ Himself? No; certain schools of theology to the contrary. These Old Testament pictures are doing a magnificent work as educators in the Christian Church. They are divine commentaries. They are the products of a keen-eyed artist, and they exalt and emphasize the things in Christ to be made prominent, and show us how God looks upon Him. Allow me an illustration. An artist paints the landscape on the farm where you were reared and over which your eye ranged every day for long years. You look at his finished picture with the consciousness that you are a competent judge as to its accuracy. Your critical eye at once finds a tree which sets off the picture, or a curvature in the mountain which gives it grace. You say, "I admire these; they intensify the beauty of the landscape; but they are not true to life, and they have no right in the picture. Neither the tree nor the curvature has an existence in fact. I know every item in that landscape." The artist

declares that they have a nexistence in fact, else as a truthful man he would not have put them on the canvas. He maintains that his picture is an exact copy of nature. To prove the trueness of his work, he takes you to the landscape itself; and to your amazement, both tree and curvature are there. Your eye had all along overlooked them. Thus it is. There are many facts in Christ's history, many functions in His offices, many beautiful shadings in His character, which would be entirely overlooked by us if the divine pictures of the Old Testament did not set them forth in bold and striking outline. There are not two Christs. The men who know most of Christ are the men who study both Testaments, and who hold to the divinity of both. If what we have said be true, we should be stimulated in watching the play of the Shekinah in the Old Testament.

The Shekinah has a larger place in the Bible than is generally supposed. It is in every book of Moses. You meet it in Joshua, in the Book of Kings, in the Chronicles, and in the stories of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Psalms sing of it. The prophets refer to it. It reappears in the New Testament, and you meet with it in the Gospels, and in the Acts, and in the Epistles, and in the Apocalypse. Where it does not appear boldly and openly, it hides itself in eloquent allusions, and in figures to which it gives origin, and which it tinges and beautifies with its golden light. If

there had been no Shekinah, these words would never have been written: "We beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." If there had been no Shekinah, these words would not have been written: "He was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person." So large is the place accorded to it by inspiration, and so wonderful are the deeds ascribed to it, that instinctively as we read the Word we ask ourselves, What was the Shekinah? The only answer that can match its prominence is this: It was the visible embodiment of Jehovah. It was the Son of God dwelling in light that is inaccessible and full of glory. He was the inner essence of that concentrated glowing brightness.

We first meet the Shekinah at the gate of Paradise in the form of "the flaming sword." The Old Testament begins by introducing it, just as the New Testament does. Eden and Bethlehem, the frontispieces of the two Testaments, glow with its light. The record in Genesis is: "So God drove out the man: and He placed [or Shekinahed] at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." The ordinary reader sees only justice here; but there is more than justice, there is mercy. It was mercy in God to turn man out of Eden, for had he eaten there and then of the tree of life he would have perpetuated

his misery. Still God did not intend to keep man forever from the tree of life. If He had He would have plucked the tree up by the roots and have cast it into the fire. No; God wanted man to reach it in the right way, and through the seed of the woman, according to the promise just given; so He set up at Eden, what we afterward find in the temple, a Holy Place, a center of worship, where man was taught the way of salvation by the symbols of the cherubim and flaming sword. When it is said that Cain and Abel came to worship before the Lord, it is meant that they came to this Holy Place. When it is said of Cain, after his sin and sentence, that "he went out from the presence of the Lord," it is meant that he went away from this Holy Place. It was in this place that men first prayed, "O Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth." It was the mission of these symbols, "flaming sword and cherubim," to keep the way of the tree of life. If they had not kept it, it would have been lost. Thus we see there was cause for singing the song of redemption at Eden as well as at Bethlehem. Scarcely was the dark word "sin" written on the Bible-page, when the bright word "salvation" was written by its side. Such is the swift action of the infinite love of our God, that even while the crash of the fall echoed in the atmosphere, the strokes of the hammers of reconstruction were heard.

The Shekinah next appears conspicuously in the story of Moses. It appeared to him in the burning bush, and called him to his great life-work. The shepherd Moses on the plains of Midian saw, and that centuries before the birth of Jesus, what the unnamed shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem saw. The bush and the manger were joined together by a pathway of Shekinah light. It appeared unto Moses afterward when he was despairing of his life-work, and when he turned for hope to God, crying, "O Lord, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." In answer to that cry Moses saw THE GLORY OF THE LORD, and communed with God in the Shekinah, and returned to the camp with a shining face.

After the time of Moses, the Shekinah dwelt for centuries in the Holy of Holies, in tabernacle and temple, as the center of worship, and as the token of God's acceptance of His covenant people. At the destruction of Solomon's Temple it was withdrawn to heaven and was seen no more until it blazed over Bethlehem on Christmas night. But the most prominent appearance in the time of Moses remains to be noticed. I refer to its appearance in The Pillar of Cloud and of Fire. To me this is the most wonderful thing in all the history of the Hebrews. I see God in it, as the captain and leader of the covenant hosts.

Some writers try to explain it away by saying that it was nothing but the common fire-signal

which led armies in ancient times. It was the custom in ancient times for a leader to go before the army, holding up a beacon of fire and smoke. The cloudlessness of the sky gave the smoke density of volume and uprightness and boldness of outline, so that it could be seen far and near. But the Bible history declares that the guide of Israel *was not* an ordinary beacon-fire. It was no human creation. No human hand held it up. No human will directed its course. It balanced itself in mid-air, and moved without the aid of created force. The rains could not quench it; the wind could not scatter it. It stood as solid as a rock amid the fiercest storms. In the daytime it threw its folds out like a canopy and protected the hosts from the scorching sun; during the night-time, when it led the march, it blazed before them like a torch-light, a mile high. When it rested the camp rested; when it marched the camp marched.

What a day the coming of The Pillar of Cloud and of Fire must have been to the Hebrews! It was Bethlehem before its time. It was a genuine Christmas to the covenant people. Think of that day! Make it real by the play of imagination! Talk to your heart about it! What must have been the feelings of wonder and of awe in the souls of the Hebrews? Were they warned of its approach? And did they all go out under the clear sky to see it come? If so, millions of faces were turned heavenward, beaming with soul and

expectation. A magnificent sight even for God to look upon. Who was the first to see the dark speck in the far distance? What voice was the first to thrill the multitudes with the cry of discovery, "Yonder it is"? Oh to have been there, to have felt the solemn stillness; and then the wild rapture at the sight of God coming to His people for permanent dwelling and guidance and protection. The dark speck approaches and deepens and broadens and sweeps earthward until it rests overhead a massive aerial column. We can see the people watching it with penetrating gaze until the shades of night fall; and then we can see a new wonder kindle among them as the cloud-column is transformed in the darkness until it blazes before them a pillar of fire.

Perhaps the most wonderful work wrought by The Pillar of Cloud and Fire in the guidance of Israel was the victory which it won at the Red Sea. When the pursuing Egyptians were about to spring upon the trembling Israelites, The Pillar of Cloud and Fire threw itself between the hosts. It turned its luminous side toward the Hebrews and flashed a noonday splendor over all the Red Sea, which suddenly rent asunder and presented its bed an open highway of escape; but it turned its dark side toward the Egyptians and threw a dark pall over them which blinded them. Some people wonder that the Egyptians dared to follow the Hebrews into the bed of the sea. We have the

explanation here. They would not have dared had they known; but they did not know. They never dreamed of the Red Sea parting, and they did not see it part. It is written: "The Pillar of Cloud was darkness to them." When they were well into the midst of the sea, in their mad pursuit, then God looked out from The Pillar of Cloud and sent from it His lightning-bolts. As flash upon flash shot through the sky and lit up the scene for the moment, then it was that the Egyptians recognized where they were. This recognition filled them with panic and terror, and they at once sought refuge in flight, crying, as they fled, "The Lord fighteth for them." You can easily imagine what followed; how, in the confusion, chariot dashed against chariot, until multitudes of chariots were unwheeled and the flight was impeded. This gave the Hebrews time to reach the other shore, and left their foes in the bed of the sea when the waters returned to their channels.

With these incidents from the Old Testament before us, showing the functions of the Shekinah, we are ready to deal with the second part of our outline, viz. :

II. *To show the identification of the Shekinah with Christ of Bethlehem.*

This involves two steps: first, to show that the Shekinah and Jehovah the Son of God are one; and second, to show that Christ of Bethlehem and Jehovah the Son of God are one. If they both

be Jehovah the Son of God, they are therefore one and the same person. To establish this identification is a mere matter of Scripture quotation. Two direct texts are all we need. Can they be found? They can. One text is Exodus 33 : 9-11. It applies the name "Jehovah" to the Shekinah in The Pillar of Cloud. In it "Jehovah" and "The Pillar of Cloud" are interchangeable terms. Now this is nothing short of complete identification. Leaving out the italicized words, which are interlopers, the text reads: "And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, The Cloudy Pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle and talked with Moses. And all the people rose up and worshiped. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." First it is said The Cloudy Pillar spake to Moses, then it is said the Lord spake to Moses, thus identifying Jehovah and the Shekinah cloud, and teaching that they were one and the same.

But is the identification of Christ with Jehovah as clear as the identification of the Shekinah with Jehovah? Yes. The question brings forward the second needed text of Scripture. It is John 1 : 18. This text declares that all revelations of God at all times have been given by the Son of God. Now revelations were given through the Shekinah of the Old Testament, therefore the Shekinah of the Old Testament must have been the Son of God. This second text was spoken by John concerning

Jesus of Nazareth, and it calls Him the Son of God. If the Shekinah be the Son of God, and if Jesus of Nazareth be the Son of God, they are one. This second text reads: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." The text, you see, sweeps over the past; it takes in all prior revelations, including those given by Jehovah of the Old Testament; and it declares that all these were given by the Son of God, whom John in the context calls Jesus Christ.

To confirm this identification, THE GLORY-LIGHT shone at Bethlehem when Jesus was born. To confirm this identification, the Transfiguration of Christ took place one dark night on the mount. His robes and face dazzled and shone with Shekinah glory. The grand purpose of the Transfiguration was to demonstrate that Jesus was THE GLORY OF THE LORD, the Shekinah, in human clothing, and that there was within Him the same inwrapped inner splendor which in the olden days dwelt in The Pillar of Cloud. If the Shekinah had not been within Him, it could not have lit up His countenance and His robes. To confirm this identification, His earthly life, which began with the shining of His glory, closed with the shining of His glory. Wrapped in the Shekinah cloud, He ascended from Olivet and swept out of sight. To confirm this identification, we are told that in

heaven He enjoys a perpetual transfiguration, and the out-flashing of His glory fills the whole of the celestial domain. "They need no sun, neither the light of the moon: for the Lamb is the light thereof."

I imagine at this point a voice saying: "But what of all this? What if Jesus Christ be the Shekinah?" Why, if Jesus be the Shekinah, then from the Shekinah we learn what Jesus Christ is and does. We learn His character and functions. Why, if Jesus Christ be the Shekinah, then the unity of the true religion is manifest. The ancient Hebrew and the modern Christian worship the same God. The Bible is one book, and the two Testaments are one revelation. Why, if Jesus Christ be the Shekinah, then all the glory of the God of the Old Testament is His. It is a mighty comfort to the Church collectively and to Christians individually, to be able to wheel into the line of Christ's works those sublime events of the past out of which rise the eternal good of God's people. I mean the events wrought by the Shekinah and recorded in the Old Testament. The God of the Old Testament is the grand and mighty God. Does Jesus Christ contain in Himself all that He contained, then Jesus Christ is the grand, mighty God, and our covenant relations with Him should beget an abiding sense of security. But I am discussing the last part of my outline without announcing it. It bids me—

III. *Enumerate the facts concerning Christ, revealed and emphasized by the Shekinah. These are the goal of our present study, and toward these we have been pressing.*

1. *The Shekinah reveals the divine will, and illumines and guides the people of God: so does Jesus Christ of Bethlehem.*

For this end was He born. He is the organ of communication between God and man. He is to the Father what language is to thought—the visible expression. He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. He uttered the most luminous sayings ever breathed into our atmosphere. He re-gave the law and spiritualized it. He corrected human errors. He taught men how to live by showing them a perfect life. He leads us to-day, by giving us His shining footsteps. Light leaps from His words as electricity leaps from the clouds. By His Holy Spirit He leads the Church as The Pillar of Cloud led Israel. The Book of the Acts makes this plain, and demonstrates what He does for the Church through His Spirit. There is a higher Canaan and a new Jerusalem, and Christ is guiding us thitherward. He will continue to guide us, until we stand by the river of life which is there, and eat of the tree of life which is there, and join our ransomed friends who are there.

2. *The Shekinah is the center of worship: so is Jesus Christ of Bethlehem.*

No sooner was Christ born than He was recog-

nized as the glory of the Holy of Holies in the temple of God, and was made the center of worship. Heaven and earth gathered around the Christ-Child in the manger. Angels, lifted into a fervor of wonder, sang as they never sung before, and the sweet strains of their inner jubilee breaking forth made the worship around the Throne audible on earth. Angels, magi, shepherds, all these worshiped. Far-away lands worshiped. The immediate neighborhood worshiped. Learning worshiped. Industry worshiped. The trinity of earth, myrrh and frankincense and gold, bowed before the Trinity of heaven. Age worshiped, and so did manhood in its prime. Mary singing her *Magnificat*, and the angels their *Gloria in Excelsis*, and the shepherds glorifying God and telling what they saw on the plain, and the wise men narrating, during the interludes of their worship, their wonderful experience with the luminous finger in the sky which pointed to Bethlehem; and the aged Anna offering her prayer of thanksgiving, and the venerable Simeon holding with holy rapture the Child in his arms and singing his doxology—all this seems to us like a beautiful poem, and it is; but more than that, it is a page of prose history crowded with thrilling realities. It is a type and a picture of what is now and what shall be forever; for Christ will always be the center of worship.

3. *The Shekinah protects the people of God and*

*subdues their enemies: so does Jesus Christ of Bethlchem.*

We have seen how the Shekinah was the defense of Israel at the Red Sea. In Jesus Christ the same person now acts in defense of the Church. He who took a horde of slaves out of the grasp of the mightiest monarch and made them a nation which has done more service for God and for humanity than all other nations combined, He it is who is the King and Head of the Church. God hath given Him to be Head over all things to the Church, and He shall reign until He has put all things under His feet. He is at every Red Sea crisis of Christendom, and His command is, "Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward." The violent gale, the thunder and lightnings, the darkness, the boom of the distant waters, the panic and the confusion, all these agencies which combined to defeat Egypt, the great world-power, in its attack upon Israel, the covenant people of God, have their counterpart in the forces which Christ has set at work for the defeat of the enemies of the truth in the nineteenth century. The Son of God to-day, as in the past, throws Himself between His people and their sore danger. He threw Himself, with Shekinah splendor, between the trembling Church and the persecuting Saul. When the poor persecuted Covenanter, who fled up the mountain steeps pursued by the dragoons of Claverhouse, sent his cry up to Him, "Lord, throw Thy mantle

over poor Sandy," He at once flung a garment of mist from the sky, and wrapped it around Sandy and the mountain; and the bloody Claverhouse was baffled and the doomed victim escaped.

When Spain sent forth its formidable Armada to persecute and to kill, He heard the cry of His devoted people, and dashed the ships of their foes into pieces. In the interests of His people the Son of God commands nations, hurls the lightning shafts, and sways all the forces of the universe. He is in all of the judgments of the nineteenth century, and He guides them past His people, and directs them straight against the citadel of their foes. Issue your decree, O Pharaoh, and consign the infants to the Nile! Issue your decree, O Haman, and doom all the covenant people to extermination! Issue your decree, O Herod, and bathe your sword in the bodies of the babes of Bethlehem, that you may destroy the new-born Christ! But know this, ye wicked rulers of the earth: God's decrees antedate yours and overshadow yours, and will inevitably annihilate yours. God has a smooth stone ready to smite every Goliath of evil.

4. *The Shekinah exercises an assimilating power in the lives of God's people: so does Jesus Christ of Bethlehem.*

The presence of the Shekinah was a wonderful and a sanctifying force in Israel. It kept the thought of God alive. The people felt it to be a

holy thing, and their thoughts of it made them holy. One instance is given of its wonderful power to assimilate and transfigure. It is the shining face of Moses. Talking with God in it, he absorbed some of the glory of the Shekinah. He reflected the communicable attributes of God, as the snow summits reflect the splendors of the sunset. His shining face suited his shining graces. It symbolized the great fact that by drawing near to God we become like God. "With open face beholding the glory of God"—i.e., beholding Christ—"we are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

The sight of Christ made the face of Stephen shine like the face of an angel. No doubt the shepherds and the wise men returned to their flocks and to their books with shining faces. Christ makes us a Shekinah, that is, an habitation of God; and when He does, not only do our graces shine, but our faces shine. The illumined soul shines through the fleshly envelope which enshrouds it, just as the brightly burning lamp makes the porcelain shade transparent. When the soul is worked up into a fellow-feeling with Christ, it is a shining light. Christ born within us, the hope of glory, transforms and transfigures our whole being, until we become His facsimile, and until we become so luminous that we can walk the crystal streets of heaven without casting the least shadow.

Such are some of the Christmas thoughts brought

us by the story of THE GLORY-LIGHT We welcome the story and the season which it adorns. This is one of the joy seasons of the Christian year. It is the season which should make us feel that glory bursts over the earth through Jesus Christ. It is the season which should make childhood sweeter, and motherhood holier, and Christ more glorious, and Christians more devoted and trustful and worshipful.

THE GLORY-LIGHT and the angel-carol declare it to be a season of joy and of sacred song. Angels of God, roll your carols over the earth, and let them echo among the stars! Church bells, ring out a jubilee, and call the race to Christ! Sacred harps and organs, respond to the hand that sweeps your strings and flies over your keys, and turn this common air around us into praise! Church of God, take up the old doxology, first sung thousands of years ago in honor of the revealed Christ, and sing it anew with all thy might:

“Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel:

Who alone doeth wonders:

Yea, blessed be His glorious Name forever;

And let the whole earth be filled with His glory,

Amen and amen.”

XII.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF YOUNG MEN IN OUR  
GREAT CITIES.



## XII.

### THE POSSIBILITIES OF YOUNG MEN IN OUR GREAT CITIES.

*“Then Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank.”—DANIEL I : 8.*

I WISH, as the introduction to my sermon, to relate the story of which the text forms a part, and, having related the story, I wish to draw from it some points for the elucidation of my theme. The story is an old one, but it is apropos to my topic. It is a tale of four young men, who, centuries ago, were lifted out of the quietude of their country homes and pushed right into the midst of the city life of Babylon, the metropolis of the world. And how did they sustain themselves? That is what the story tells us. And what were their possibilities in Babylon? That also is what the story tells us. What they did in Babylon young men of their type can do in New York and Brooklyn.

The story runs on this wise :

During one of the early incursions of the Chaldean army into Palestine it happened that four Hebrew youths were made captives and carried to Babylon. Their names were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah. When they reached the great city they were placed in the king's palace, the most exposed circle in all the city. It was the custom in ancient times when one nation conquered another nation to select sons from the conquered nation and train them for positions of power at the seat of government. In this way the conquering nations conciliated the conquered. In this way also they secured for themselves new talent, and strengthened the government. The sons chosen were usually young. They were lads from fourteen to seventeen. Such could easily be molded. Their prejudices were not strong enough to keep them from adopting the new nation as their nation. Daniel and his comrades were selected by the King of Babylon according to the custom of their times, and the ordinary results were expected. But the very first chapter of the Book of Daniel begins by telling us that the results expected were not realized. Hebrew parents so trained their sons that when they reached the age of fourteen they were grandly confirmed in their fathers' religion, and in loyalty to their country. Daniel and his comrades stand as the exponents of the value of an early religious education. Though

only in their teens, they thought for themselves and for themselves recognized what duty to God and country was. They knew, too, that duty, like God, is an ever-present thing. They argued that what was duty and principle in their Judæan home was duty and principle in the city of Babylon, and their reasoning was correct. Place does not affect or change duty. Conscience is not a thing confined to latitude or longitude. In every thing and in every place we should be conscientious.

These young men carried with them constant reminders of their God and of their religion. Their names were such reminders. Their names were covenant names. They were compounded with the name of the Most High God, and were significant. Young men, we should make more of our covenant names than we do. Children of the Church, the names which you received in baptism should be a defense to you in the hour of temptation. You should speak thus to your own hearts: "I have been named with the name of the blessed Trinity. I have a Christian name, and I will not dechristianize it by committing sin. Named by the name of the holy God, I must and I will keep myself pure for God."

Realizing the power of a sacred name, the King of Babylon changed the names of these young men. He gave them names related to his heathen

idols. Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, Azariah he called Abed-nego. But these heathen names would not stick. Young as these four Hebrews were, Nebuchadnezzar was too late in making the change. Their true names were engraven on their souls, and were all alive with the memories of their fathers' God and their mothers' faith. Besides this, they were written upon the crystal pages of the Lamb's Book of Life, the register of the everlasting covenant.

The incident in the story which is especially brought before us, and which tests and sets off the character of these young men, is that which pertained to the regulation of their diet—their conduct in their boarding-house. Great care was taken of their diet. There was a special officer appointed to look after it. So anxious was the king for their growth and development, that he furnished their meals from the royal table. The best of the season was put before them. They were fed on luxuries. Wine, and seasoned meats, and brandied puddings, and spiced cakes, and confectioneries of all kind were on the table and within their reach. How hard it is to discipline a boy's appetite when sitting at a loaded table! How cruel the prohibitions of parents seem! Cracked wheat, and rolled oats, and simple bread and butter! These things are fairly despised in comparison with puddings, and pies, and pastries, and ices,

and wine sauce, and candied grapes, and *tutti frutti*. Will these Hebrew boys eat the king's food? Why not? They have keen appetites, and their palates can appreciate these royal dainties. Besides, the king commands them to eat. Disobedience in the form of refusal to eat will render them liable to punishment. To decline will make them marked and peculiar. Will these Hebrew boys eat the king's food? Why not? There are a multitude of reasons why not. The food from the king's table has been set apart and consecrated to idols. To eat of it means to identify one's self with idols. Now, identification with idols is treason against the true God. Besides this, the regimen and menu of the king's table is contrary to the dietetic laws under which God has put the Hebrew nation. It contains food which God has pronounced ceremonially unclean. The question with these Hebrew boys was this: "Shall we act according to conscience, or shall we act according to appetite? Conscience or appetite? Which?" At once, and without a moment's hesitation, they answered: "We will act according to conscience." And according to conscience they did act. Give me young men who, when appetites and passions clamor for gratification, can call forth conscience and will and all the higher faculties of their higher nature and can issue the command, "*Down, passion! down, appetite!*"

These Hebrews the moment they were con-

fronted by temptation registered at once a purpose of heart to resist it. They studied and weighed their situation and their duty, and out of their study grew an intelligent conviction. Into this conviction they put all the power of their will, and then won. My fellow-men, nothing is accomplished apart from will power. We neglect duties for the most part simply because we do not will to do them, and do not put our will into them. Duty should always be married to resolve.

We know their resolution. Let us see how they carried it out. It was met, as we would naturally surmise, by opposition. The head-officer to whom they communicated it greeted them with a "Tut, tut! it is nonsense, it is nonsense!" He pooh-poohed their theory as a boy's idea; and he said he could not entertain it for a single moment. If he allowed any infringement of the laws of the house or any disparagement of the king's table, he himself would suffer for it. He then tried to reason with them by telling them that their diet would show in their faces. They would be pale and haggard if they fed only on pulse and water. Their companions and competitors, with their ruddy cheeks and clear complexions, would shame them when they appeared before the king. Nothing daunted by a first refusal, they still pressed their case. They said, "Give us a trial of but ten days, and then compare us with our competitors." This method was so intensely practical and so fair that it

could not be rejected. When the ten days were up their faces were put side by side with the faces of the king-fed, and they won the day. Cold water and plain food always defeat wine and sumptuous living. Their faces were the furthest possible remove from the pimpled faces of the high livers. They were fair and shining. Besides this, they had in them the illumination of an honest heart and an approving conscience. They reflected the beauty of holiness. Thus it always is: the good stands a competitive examination, and wins. Moses floors Jannes and Jambres, and Daniel and his comrades excel the Chaldean astrologers, and the man of simple food outlives and outworks the wine-bibber and gormandizer. Daniel, we are told in this story, outlived whole dynasties. He remained in power while several successions of kings passed away. He treated his body well, and in this he did right; for the body is the temple of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and it is neither to be defiled nor maltreated nor neglected. We are to keep it in temperance and in soberness and in chastity; we are to keep it from the heat of lust and from the wear of over-exertion. Viewed from any standpoint, the neglect of sanitary laws is a sin. Hygiene is an angel of God both to the soul and to the body. It means health of body and spirituality of soul. Among the crying wants of humanity to-day is better hygiene. Men want to eat less,

and to eat fewer things. There are ten people in the city that are overfed to one person that is underfed. I say this not in the interest of those who keep our boarding-houses, for the Lord knows that if some of our young men have not meager enough diet it is not the fault of boarding-house keepers; but I say it in the interest of those who sit at the table and who eat indiscriminately. I know Paul says, "Eat whatsoever things are set before you, and ask no questions;" but I know just as well that Paul, when he said that, was speaking of a free lunch, and at a free lunch that is the only mannerly thing to do.

But let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. The result of the stand for conscience which these young men took upon coming to Babylon, was this: it gave them a diet which proved conducive to study, health, and work, and it kept their minds clear and well-poised, and built up the whole man. Finally, when they appeared before the king to receive their commissions for life, they excelled all who competed with them and were preferred by the king. They outranked all the wise men of the city, and took the highest places of the kingdom. Do you ask, *What are the possibilities of young men when they come into the city?* This story answers, Everything good and great and grand is among their possibilities. The highest places in commerce, and in the law, and in the ministry, and in

medicine, and in the workshop, and in the state, are among their possibilities. They can, if they will, take the city, and hold the city, and control the city. Thus it was in Babylon, and what was possible in Babylon is possible in New York and Brooklyn. The same virtues succeed and rule in all ages and in all places.

I am not alone in believing that if the young men in our cities will only be Daniels they can have Daniel's success. I have been talking with others upon this subject, and I find that this is the conviction of many.

I asked one of the most prominent and most successful of our New York merchants the other day: "What can a young man coming from the country become in New York?" What do you think his reply was? It was this: "I came into the city of New York a young man, and two thirds of the successful merchants in the city to-day came as I came." The essence of his answer was this: what the respected and influential and successful merchants of to-day have become, our young men who are entering upon life may become. A young man coming to the city and beginning life in the city is like a seed. We cannot see all that is in a seed. We must be instructed as to what is in it. Some one must take the acorn, for example, and plant it, and nurture it, and evolve from it the oak, and from the oak evolve the forest, before we can know how much

is in the acorn. Even so some one must grow the young man that we may know what is in him.

Our successful men of the city who in years gone by came from rural homes are the grand oaks in the human forest of to-day, and they show us the possibilities of the latest acorns come to town.

I asked a leading citizen of Brooklyn: "Do you think that the chances of young men who come to our cities to-day are as good as the chances of young men were when you came to the city?" His reply was: "There are more young men in our cities now than there were when I entered life, but there are more young men needed. There are thousands of more places open to young men, and calling for young men." Then he continued: "We older men can live only so long, and when we go our places will be vacant for those who immediately press after us. You may count upon it, that in thirty years almost our entire population will have changed." This certainly means all the chances that young men could ask. Then he added confidentially: "Look at the young women in our homes. I tell you that fathers are on the lookout for young men who have the snap and the true metal in them, to act as trustees of their noble daughters and their fortunes. But mark you, they must be grand young men and good young men." Honesty requires me to say that this man had no daughters of his own. But I must add further that he was a sensible man, and I believe capable of judg-

ing fathers who have daughters. He himself had certainly married according to the doctrine which he preached, for he spoke as a rich son-in-law. He said nothing of the mothers in our cities, he spoke only of the fathers. As a rule I imagine mothers are not as favorable to young men who have just come to town as fathers are. But what of this? What moral is there in it? This: Young men, begin your attentions and intentions with the mothers. Let them see the best that is in you. Win them, and then your call at the pastor's study will come as a matter of course.

I asked another man, a Bostonian, a man who employs many young men, "Do you think that young men coming to the city can compete with rich men's sons who are city-born?" His reply was quick and sharp: "Certainly. They not only can compete, but they can win. Rich men's sons lack self-reliance and grit and perseverance and economy. The Dandy Fifth is an exception. In employing young men, my preferences are two to one in favor of the young men who come to us." I asked, "What advice would you give young men as they start in life in our cities?" He replied: "First of all, I think I would tell them to use their patience, and to hold on to their position and their work like grim death." He gave as his reason for this advice the following: Young men have heard of fabulous wealth acquired at a single turn of the wheel, and they expect to get along too rapidly,

and become rich too soon. Now if a man would make money lawfully he must give an equivalent for it. He must give as much of an equivalent in the city as he gives in the country. "Tell young men to be patient. Tell them not to leave their situations because everything is not precisely what they would wish, or because their employer becomes unruly. Tell them that if they expect to rise they must work their way up inch by inch, and they must work long and work hard. Tell them that they must be patiently faithful in little things."

Young men, there is a great deal of common sense in this advice. We are not willing to be patient and faithful in dealing with trifles, with little things. We want to be busy with large things. We want to flash, and soar, and be conspicuous, and walk on mountain-tops. We want to be *Niagaras*, and have majestic sweep, and deafening roar, and white foam, and flashing rainbows. We forget that the pathway to Niagara is from the single water-drop to the tiny spring which is almost invisible, and from the tiny spring to the trickling rill, and from the trickling rill to the babbling brook, and from the babbling brook to the river-branch, and from the river-branch to the river itself, and then down the broad channel of the river, gathering tributary and tributary, until at last the plunge is made over the high rocks. Becoming a Niagara means beginning with the little drop and moving gradually and grandly on

toward the vast body of water which leaps the rocks with foam and roar and sparkling rainbows.

But I must cease acting the reporter, and come back to the story of my text. It tells us that young men upon coming to our cities may, if they so will it, make the grandest success of their life in the city. They may reach the highest places in every department. Now the practical question comes: How? I can only indicate two, or at most three, brief answers, and leave them with you for a further development. These answers are suggested by the story of the text.

1. *In the first place, success in our city comes to a young man through trueness to his character.*

And here let me say it is not the city, it is the man himself that is everything. The city is only the occasion calling out the man. If evil be in the man it will come out of him everywhere, country and city. All the evil of the world is not in the city. Let me give you a single item from my experience. I was born in the city, and brought up in the city; but when I reached the age of fifteen I left the city and went to a college in the country. I was a young man from the city. I was sent to the country for protection. But what I wish to relate is the first thing that happened to me upon going to the country. It was this: the first student whose acquaintance I made, a country youth three years older than myself, asked me to spend

my first evening at college by going out to a farmer's orchard to steal apples. Did I go? I did not. The farmer had a large dog. But I must be just to my first country acquaintance and tell you the full story of my relations with him. He is now in one of the leading pulpits of the city of New York. He came to New York when I was pastor there, and I went to hear him preach his first sermon. I had never heard him preach. I was a little late, so as I entered the church he was reading the Scripture lesson, and these were the first words which I heard from his lips as a preacher, the words of Paul: "*Let him that stole, steal no more.*" His first words as a minister to me counteracted his first words as a fellow-student.

The point which I want to make is this: *the city is only the interpreter of a man.* I cannot give you an exact diagnosis of a man in the quietness of a rural village. He is hemmed in by the sentiment of his rural home. The eyes of all the community are upon him, and he must walk straight. If he does not his business will leave him. Character and cash depend upon his being, seemingly at least, a true man. There is no crowd there in which he can hide himself. I cannot tell whether he be acting out his true self or not. But let me watch that man as he lives one week in the city and I will diagnose his character for you. What does he wish most of all to see in the city? What

are the places which he frequents? Who are the people with whom he strikes an acquaintance? What are the things which he avoids as he moves among people who know him not? At what does he laugh? At what does he weep? For what does he spend his money? Which is popular with him, the church or the theater, the prayer-meeting or the circus, the refined art-gallery or the show-window hung with the low prints of actresses photographed for carnal eyes? These are leading questions, and their answers reveal the man.

How many young men come into our cities and go headlong to ruin! They come from the pure atmosphere of a father's home, but no sooner do they reach here than they fling off all moral restraint. They ally themselves with evil society, feed the gross appetites of their lower natures, give free rein to their desires. The result of all this you well know. Their whole being is soon demonized. They are early stricken with dire consequences. The flush of health leaves their faces, and, devitalized and consumptive, they go back to their homes to die. Ah! this is sad, sad, very sad. But such cases occur every year by the hundreds. From hundreds of rural homes to-day the bitterest of curses are issued against the city because of the fall of noble sons. I do not wish to shield our cities against a single righteous curse; every evil within the city should be cursed; but I wish to be fair. I wish to set fact and truth

before rural homes, and before young men from rural homes. Nine tenths of these ruined young men fell before they set foot in the city. They fell in their inner nature, in their secret longing, before they started from home. They fell spiritually in their father's house. Reading of the sinful pleasures of the city, they gloated over these in private, and lived with them in thought, and made these possible sins actualities by the power of imagination in the secrecy of their own souls. When they came here the city only gave them an opportunity to act themselves out. The city only made visible that which was invisible. I would ring it out through all the land to-day that the danger which besets young men in coming into the city begins in their far-away homes—begins in the plans which they make for sight-seeing before they receive their mother's good-by kiss. Young men, bring a true personality with you into the city, bring with you minds filled with holy resolves, bring with you consciences which can detect and abhor sin, bring with you hearts that can compassionate the fallen and weep over them, bring with you the Christ-spirit, and the city will be for you a magnificent stage for a magnificent drama of life—a field for the culture of your higher nature, a sphere for the wide play of all your faculties, and an outlet into places of power and usefulness which the righteous God has everywhere prepared for a righteous manhood.

2. *Success comes to a young man in the city only when he is true to himself and develops himself.*

The development of self is a great work, and requires many things.

*It requires that you shall hold self to a strict account.*

Away from home, away from the restraints which were once thrown around you by loving friends, you must be a restraint to yourself. You must convert your *liberty* into *loyalty*. You must keep life under the inspection of conscience. Be severe with yourself; be rigid and conscientious even to the border of what the free-and-easy would call morbidness. Measure yourself by some high moral and spiritual standard, and say to your soul, "Soul, you must equal that." As a man, you have this wonderful power. You can go out of yourself, and picture yourself in the third person, and criticise yourself; you can say, when you do not like yourself: "I ought to be more than that. I ought to be better than that. I am misshapen, ill formed, undeveloped. I hate and detest that old self; I will strive after the other and higher self, which as yet is only an ideal." You have the power to put yourself into helpful contrast with others who are better.

Do you remember that wondrous book of Victor Hugo's, where Jean Valjean, the escaped convict, meets with the old bishop, who lovingly talks

to him, and breaks him down by his forgiveness? Do you remember how he contrasts himself with that affectionate and noble-hearted bishop, and then projects himself outside of himself and loathes and turns away from the old Jean Valjean, and determines to be something better than that? It was because he did that that he became what he afterward was—the noble-hearted Jean Valjean, the mayor of the city, a man tender and true in every fiber of his being.

*The development of self requires that you shall have large faith in the possibility of the noble and the true in human life.*

Whenever I see a young man who has lost his ideals, and who is satisfied with a *few face-qualities*, who ceases to believe with all his might in anything, who has lost his faith in honor and in integrity and in virtue, I see a young man who is already lost. Every young man should have an *Excelsior* in his soul. There should be within him a sense of the possibility of incarnating the fine and the noble and the true. Young man, when you say that all men are a sham, and that there is nothing but the low and the selfish and the carnal and the untrue and the unchaste in the world, you tell your soul that which is not true; and you forever fetter all your higher powers. Allow me to say to you that Jesus Christ was a reality, and that Jesus Christ in all His moral beauty and perfection is this very day finding a thousand fac-

similes in humanity. The belief in this is the first step toward your higher and better self.

The development of self requires constant and ceaseless effort and sacrifice. So does every grand product. All the triumphs of genius and of moral being are the embodiments of hard, persistent work, and tension and sacrifice. If the harp wishes to fill the air with solemn and soul-stirring music, it must give up all of its strings to be so stretched that they will almost break. But out of this tension and strain come delightful harmonies, and wave upon wave of rapturous sound. The music of a true Christian personality is like the ringing of the chimes of heaven on earth, and the striking of the harps of gold; but every faculty in the harp-nature of man must be keyed up to the concert pitch of heaven. Will, conscience, imagination, reason, the faculty of emotion, the memory, all must be brought into accord with the perfect human nature of Jesus Christ.

A Christian personality means effort. Yes, so does every grand product. Nothing can be achieved without work and expenditure. Everything costs. Light is the result of the burning of the candle. The rosy apple is the whole year of life lived by the tree. The golden flower is just so much expenditure of the sun. Everything that is worth an existence costs. It cost Angelo something to construct the dome of St. Peter's. He had to build it up and tear it down in his mind;

rebuild it and modify it, before he could fling it abroad as a second sky.

*The development of self requires that you shall love, and love that which is good.*

You must get out of your own thoughts and feelings and sympathies, and live for something beyond yourself. I trust you have read, and so will remember, George Eliot's story of "Silas Marner." Silas Marner, disappointed and soured by the experience of his early life, becomes a hermit miser. Bitter against all the world, life has no significance for him any longer, except as he can hoard up a little pile of gold, and so put himself beyond the need of dependence and out of communication with his fellow-men. Every night he takes out the shining coins and comforts himself by counting them over and over. Thus he does until at length one night a human waif, a little forsaken baby-girl, is thrown on his doorstep. This child he feels compelled to take in and give shelter, and to adopt as the child of his heart and of his care. As a result he comes again into contact with humanity, and is transfigured and made a man once more. He has something to love; and love enlarges his soul. Young men, *have somebody to love*; somebody who is good and pure and inspiring. Love, for example, some noble young woman. If the love be reciprocated, you will be inspired and lifted to a region in which you will rise higher and higher. No greater human power can

come into a man's life than the power which emanates from the pure love of a noble woman—a love that penetrates as perfume does ; that never sleeps ; that divides every thought and every feeling ; and that turns service and hard work into pleasure. Such a love transforms and transfigures. Goethe hath well said :

“ The woman-soul leadeth  
Us upward and on.”

In the life of man there is first the soul of the mother ruling and leading, and then by and by there is the soul of the wife ; and the two together, the mother and the wife, make the man. It is the loving and loved woman that determines the man. The real man is the woman he carries in his heart. If she be an angel of a woman, she will make him an angel of a man ; but if she be a demon of a woman, she will make him a demon of a man. The letting of a noble woman's love into your life is like letting the sunbeam into the great clouds that float in the dome above. The sunbeam makes the vapory mass beautiful with its many delicate tints and burning hues. Never in life's experience is there a further remove from all that is earthly than when one soul reads all its destiny in another. It is not strange, therefore, that when Paul speaks of the union which consummates such love, he compares its mystery to that which unites the Church and Christ.

Let a man love anything purely and disinterestedly, and he will be a better man for that love—less selfish and more appreciative of the good. In preaching this I am not preaching a novelty, something that I have discovered. This was known away back in the days of Socrates and Plato. Back there, men used to reason in this way about love: Let a man begin by loving one beautiful form, and from the love of the one he will rise to the love of many beautiful forms. From loving beautiful forms he will rise to the love of beautiful practices. From the love of fair practices he will rise to the love of fair ideas. From the love of fair ideas he will rise to the love of the person who thinks the fair ideas. From the love of the noble thinker, the magnificent woman, he will step over into eternal love and eternal friendship with God, the Creator of the magnificent woman, whose divine Spirit is the holy power within her, making her magnificent. The pathway of a noble woman's love is the pathway that leads to God.

Only a few weeks ago I saw a simple illustration of this point which I am pushing. I was walking across the Boston Common behind a young couple in the full vigor of budding manhood and womanhood. She was an art student, and he was an admirer of just such an art student. Gallantly he was carrying her books and utensils, and the two were earnestly conversing. As I passed them I overheard her say, "But there is a moral in

what you mean to do; you certainly wish to put your whole uprightness into it." That is all I heard, and I naturally looked into the face of the speaker. To use Bronson Alcott's phrase, it was "a solar face," and shone with purity and spiritual life. Back of her fine words the young woman put a winning smile; and I could see that that smile, which expressed hope and confidence, and even admiration, sent her words to the very core of the young man's being. The flush that suffused his cheek told this. He was charged and surcharged to the full with moral electricity. Good resolutions fairly crackled in his finger-tips, and lofty purposes sparkled in his eyes. I said to the friend who was walking with me, "That was well said; that good advice was effective. It was a sugar-coated pill, but he took it with evident relish from the fair one. I venture to affirm that if his father or even his mother had given him that lecture it would not have been received with half that grace."

Oh the power of a noble woman with a noble conscience! Young women of America, by true-ness to your womanhood, keeping your personality holy and upright, living solely with the chaste and sweet, permitting in your presence only the highest and the best, and indorsing only the upright and the noble, you can by your love and your conscience and your indorsement and your admiration capture the manhood of the land, and develop it, and sanctify it, and transfigure it, and make it loyal

and hold it loyal to all that is sublime and all that is God-like. There is nothing grander on God's earth than a young man through whose being the tide of a noble love is surging; who has all the susceptibility, the intensity, the tenderness, the passion of a fine nature; who is just beginning to look out on the sweetness and beauty of life; who is thrilled by all that is good and great in the world; whose being is a delicate instrument played upon by all the touches of the immense universe, and which gives back in response the wondrous music of holy ambitions and God-like resolves. A young man in whose manhood reason is luminous, and self-respect is positive, and ideal is lofty, and honor and honesty and virtue and pure love are all in all—to such a young man all the city is open; such a young man is in himself superior to all the forces that play in a city. He himself is a force above all earthly force. He will be a Joseph in the cities of Egypt; he will be a Daniel in the city of Babylon; and by and by he will be a luminous son of God in the city of the skies.

XIII.

INSECTS WITH WINGS, OR BEAUTIFIED  
SINS.



### XIII.

## INSECTS WITH WINGS, OR BEAUTIFIED SINS.

*“Every creeping thing that flieth is unclean unto you.”—*  
DEUTERONOMY 14: 19.

THE text is a precept from the dietetic and sanitary code under which God put His covenant people. The purpose of this code was one with that of the ritual of the tabernacle, viz., to teach and to beget holiness unto the Lord. It was not enough that the Hebrew be taught by the services of the tabernacle that “without holiness no man can see God.” He did not live in the tabernacle; most of his life was spent outside of it. Outside of the tabernacle he needed also to be taught the very same lesson; so God wrote it on the creatures of nature. He filled earth and sea and air with symbols, all of which proclaimed to initiated ears the necessity of holiness. This brought God into the daily life of the Hebrew and made Him the center of that life. God worshiped in the church—that is good, but that is not enough. God

must fill the whole of life. God must be in our business; God must be in our diet; God must be in the care which we take of our bodies. Everywhere, whatsoever we do must be done because it is right in His sight; everywhere, whatsoever we refrain from doing must be refrained from because it is wrong in His sight. As the New Testament puts it: "Whatsoever therefore ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God."

This code reveals the jealous care of Jehovah over His people. In church and out of church, at home and abroad, asleep and awake, by day and by night, He regulates their habits and their practices. He attends to their food and their clothing, and He prescribes for their most secret life. He overlooks nothing which in anywise affects the well-being and the purity of those in whose midst He desires to dwell. To one out of covenant and out of sympathy with God this would be an intolerable burden. To have God about his path by day and beside his bed by night would be a restraint beyond endurance; but to a lover of holiness and to an admirer of God nothing could be more delightful.

The object of this code is to promote holiness. Now one way of helping to holiness is a right care of the body, with its surroundings and its diet. The body is the organ of the spirit. It is in these bodies of ours that our spiritual, reasoning, loving, hoping, striving self dwells. Our bodily faculties

are the instruments of our spiritual activities. We must take care of these, clothe them properly and feed them properly. There is no plainer truth than this, viz., the way we treat our bodies affects our spiritual activities. Right food is conducive to right soul-life. Food has a wider influence than we think. Many a man is less devout, less useful, less excellent and admirable in heart and life, than he might be because of the unguarded way in which he eats and drinks. We may be neither gluttons nor drunkards, yet we may lower our character and lessen our influence by our ill-regulated appetite. We should be as careful in feeding our bodies as we are in feeding our souls. Food in both cases tells for good or for bad.

But it is not my purpose at this time to expound the dietetic and sanitary code which God gave the Hebrews; it is my purpose only to notice that this code had another characteristic besides the dietetic and sanitary. In the education of the Hebrews it had a symbolic characteristic. "It is only when we regard these ceremonial distinctions as symbolizing great spiritual truths that we find a safe and consistent theory to guide us in their interpretation. They were, up to a certain point, sanitary and dietetic. True, but they were also intended for the instruction of the soul in the distinctions between moral good and evil." In an age when book-teaching was unknown, every day's abstention from certain sorts of food was a constant

teaching by symbolic object-lesson of the necessity to be watchful against any contact with or participation in sin.

The text is a pointed illustration of the symbolic character of the code. It carries in it a moral and religious lesson. It strikes at popular evils and at sins in high places. It warns against evil in the forms of gilded fascinations. It is a divine protest against admired and cultured evil, evil which sparkles and shines. It points out the kinship of all such evil to evil that is gross and vulgar. It proclaims the moral identity of all sin—the genteel and the shabby, the cultured and the crude, the attractive and the repulsive, the scientific and the ignorant, the poetical and the prosaic, the refined and the base. All sin is of the same principle; it differs only in manner and degree. We need to be told this over and over, in order that we may be put on our guard against sin in its most dangerous and effective and subtle forms. This is what the text tells us. It raises the alarm against creeping things with wings—i.e., against evils adorned, and against Satan when he shines.

There is a natural disgust in every one to the idea of eating, or even handling, a creeping worm or caterpillar. However difficult this feeling may be to analyze, God has given it to the race for some purpose. The use which this code makes of it shows its purpose, viz.: All things which are

abhorrent to the human instinct—things which we call repulsive and disgusting—are so many indications of the great truth that we are to make clear-cut and sharp distinctions between clean and unclean, between good and evil, and between right and wrong.

This natural instinct of which we speak, God saw fit to incorporate in His law to His people. He forbade their eating these repulsive, crawling things. Instinct was not enough; there must be instinct with a plus—instinct plus God's law. We know how the natural instinct is often overcome by willful habits. We find degraded men taking pleasure in articles of food which the human palate originally and instinctively rejected. Hence the necessity of a law behind instinct. In supporting instinct by a law, as He does here, God teaches us that although in conscience we may shrink from gross sins, yet gradually we may so blunt conscience that we will indulge in the very sins we formerly abhorred. The protests of natural conscience are not sufficient as the guide of life; we need the divine law as our guide. No man ever began his career as a thief, or a murderer, or a debauchee. He despised such a style of life, as each of us naturally loathes a slimy worm; but sin so wrought in him that he began to shrink less and less from these gross sins, and at last he became enamoured of them. The words of the poet will always be true:

“ Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,  
That to be hated needs but to be seen ;  
But seen too oft, familiar with its face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

If sin in its grossest form be thus dangerous, what must be the unmeasured power of sin when it disguises itself and puts on the robes of beauty and the forms and shapes of virtue and art and science and progress—when it enthrones itself in fashion and in the palace of wealth, and when it claims the authority of antiquity? Sin as a caterpillar is bad enough; *but sin as a butterfly is a thousand times worse*. It is sin captivating the eye and winning the admiration of the whole race. The text is a warning to the men and women who are in love with immoral butterflies. It deals, not with gross and *vulgar sinners*, but with refined and *elegant sinners*; with those who lead society and give tone to public sentiment. These detest the crawling worm most heartily; their refinement is such that all sins in gross forms repel them; but alas! they are repulsive, not because they are *sin*, but because they are *gross*. Their abstinence from sins in gross forms is not because of their love of God or their desire for holiness, but simply the result of a fastidious eclecticism. It is the result of æsthetic taste, and not of moral taste. The text teaches that these are sinners as truly as the most vulgar. They are alienated from God. They disregard and disobey His laws. They have no

sympathy with His cause. They ignore His holy Word. They set their hearts on earthly things, and, like the rich man of the parable, make earth their heaven.

Often a refined and educated person in this godless condition thinks he is very pure because he avoids gross sins. He says, like the Pharisee, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." But he neither knows what God is nor what sin is. The creeping thing which his refinement has rejected has been furnished with pretty wings, and now he loves it. The nauseous caterpillar has dressed itself up as a beautiful butterfly, and in this form he sports with the creature. But what does God's law say? This: "Every creeping thing that flieth is unclean unto you." The wings and pretty colors have not altered the nature of the vermin. The same uncleanness is there as before.

For example, to give my thought a practical turn: The cunning with which the refined merchant gets off his damaged goods on another, or gets a false price by sly representation, is as sinful in God's sight as the plundering of a jewelry store by a common burglar and sneak-thief. In one case the ugly sin has the pretty wings which a false system of trade puts on it, but in the other case its ugliness is not disguised. The falsehoods of refined society which form the staple of a fash-

ionable woman's conversation are just as disgusting to pure souls as the broad lies for which this fashionable woman dismisses her servant with horror at her untruthful character. "How many there are who would shrink with dismay from over-sensuality, and yet will in their private reading gloat over a licentious novel!" It is the very same crawling thing, only now it has pretty wings.

We should learn that sin has a wonderful power to change its appearance. We shall never be ready for life until we do so learn; we shall never feel the importance of cultivating *the discriminating faculty* which God has put within us; we shall never feel the necessity of going to God for our definitions of sin and for a description of the true inwardness of sin. We must be told what sin is by the One who has omniscient eyes and who looks evil through and through. The power of sin to change and to beautify itself is like that of the caterpillar to change itself into a butterfly circling and soaring in the crystal atmosphere of the great dome.

For the purpose of impressing upon my mind the beauty of the butterfly I read a volume lately written by a popular entomologist with this as my sole objective point. I found this in my reading, that the beauty of this winged creature bears the scrutiny of the most powerful microscope. The more the searching light is poured upon it, the greater its beauty shines out. It far transcends the beauty of any man-made thing. It has been

compared to the rich mosaic built by human skill ; but the comparison soon ceases to be a comparison and speedily becomes a contrast of the most striking kind. It is said that the finest modern mosaic picture contains as many as eight hundred and seventy tesserae, or separate pieces, to the square inch of surface, and we marvel at this ; but upon the same small space of a butterfly's wing the entomologist has counted no less than one hundred and fifty thousand separate glittering scales, each scale carrying in it a gorgeous color beautiful and distinct.

Who can follow nature's pencil and chisel and brush as these work upon the wings of a butterfly ? On every wing there is a picture as varied as the rainbow. Every wing is iridescent with different lights that shift and change. Here are patches of blue, and spots of purple, and lines of green and aurelian and red. Each wing is checkered and veined like an exquisite piece of Parian marble. It is speckled and mottled, flecked and tinted. Here are magnificent comminglings of colors, and these are rich and harmonious in tone. Here are fringes of snow-white, and waves of crimson, and whole chains of little crescents. Here is graceful elegance, and here is comely shape. Here is masterful tinting, and tipping, and gilding, and flecking. Here are all the glories of the sunbeam broken up into prismatic beauties. The wing of the highest-typed butterfly is the work of God,

“to whom an atom is an ample field.” The poets call the butterfly “the child of the sun,” “a flying and flashing gem,” “a flower of Paradise gifted with the magic power of flight.” They tell us that its wings are as rich as the evening sky, and that they expand and fold with a silent ecstasy.

I want to magnify the transmutation of the caterpillar into the butterfly. I want to set into prominence the great contrast between the crawler and the flyer, the creeping worm on the leaf and the creature springing from the chrysalis to sport in the sunshine. I want every attractive feature of this “*child of the sun*,” as the poet calls it, to shine out and thrill. And why? That I may make clear the point of the text, and remind you that *the butterfly is only a caterpillar beautified with wings*. It is only a painted worm, decked in a velvet suit and adorned with sparkling gems. The swallow which moves on larger and swifter wings knows this. It recognizes the worm in the midst of the beauty. When it is out in search of food for its nestlings, with keen eye it searches for the butterfly, and with a wicked swoop it darts down upon it, and seizes it, and flies home, crying to its brood, “*I have caught a worm*.” Worms on wings are as good to it for food as worms crawling on leaf or ground.

Egg and caterpillar and butterfly, the three forms of this creature’s existence, are one and of the same nature. The forms are different, but the

essences are the same and identical. I want to make the beauty of the symbol as striking as possible, that the lesson taught by it may be as striking as possible. I care for the butterfly, but I care for it only as it speaks to me of the power of Satan to transform himself into an angel of light, and of the power of sin to make itself attractive, and of the power of error to deck itself in robes that resemble the robes of truth, so that even the very elect of God are in danger of being deceived.

Let us see how sin popularizes and beautifies itself. This will help us to keenness in the discernment and the detection of sin. The great desideratum with the multitudes is just this: they do not recognize sin when they meet it.

1. *Sin beautifies itself by assuming and wearing the wings of wit.*

Wit can be just as wicked as it pleases, and yet be popular. To be witty is all the excuse that evil finds necessary for its being. There is a perfect craze for a joke, and there is no form in which sin and the devil so frequently enter the best society.

We all know the power of wit in making an out-and-out lie acceptable to a community, and in giving it currency. Men abhor a bungling, stumbling lie; but let the same lie cleverly incarnate itself in a joke and fill itself with laughing humor, let it get some one to tell it admirably, and at once it becomes popular. Men are proud to repeat it.

They circulate it for the pleasure which it gives. It is an illustration of the fine art of lying. It is dramatic. They are so taken up in admiring the exquisite dexterity of the form in which it is told, that they never think of hating its immoral substance. But it is a lie all the same, and its untruth, and its unchaste thought, soaring and flying around society upon the merry ripples of laughter, do their fatal work with a greater deadliness than the vulgar lie that goes about condemned in its native unadorned deformity.

Wit for the most part is the instrument which genius uses in working out its evil nature. Byron and Burns and Shakespeare clothe their impure and wicked thoughts in the language of wit. In the garments of wit their bad thoughts sparkle for very brightness. To such an extent is this true, that we have to argue for expurgated editions of Byron and Burns and Shakespeare and Goethe. I was astonished to come across this sentiment in a recent book of one of our best writers, viz., that the old classics, the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Æneid*, the dramas of *Æschylus*, *Euripides*, and *Sophocles*, the fables of *Æsop*, the *Lives* of *Plutarch*, and the histories of *Herodotus* and *Thucydides* and *Xenophon* and *Livy*, are more wholesome companions for our youth than the unexpurgated editions of *Pope* or *Dryden* or *Byron* or *Shakespeare* or *Goethe*. But how come the questionable paragraphs and verses

and lines into these modern classics of ours? They come in the garb of wit, and in this form they receive an audience because they glow and please and fascinate. It is the duty of the Christian to clip the wings of wit when genius uses them as an adornment for the immoral caterpillar. It is the duty of Christians to buy only and read only expurgated editions.

2. *Sin beautifies itself by assuming and wearing the wings of fashion.*

Whatever fashion prescribes is law. Whatever is in fashion needs no defense or argument. For example, fashion prescribes dress, and sometimes the boldness of the attire which it prescribes is administrative of evil, but the dress obtains. Unfashionable people may find fault, but fashionable people, never. They give no thought to the morals of a dress. It has come from a fashionable establishment and a fashionable price has been paid for it, and there is no ground for any exercise of thought or of conscience. I beg the pardon of fashion, but there is ground for both thought and conscience; and there is a personal responsibility to be met here. The fashionable establishment sins every time it sends out an immoral costume, that is true; but more than that, the woman of society every time she dons the costume condones and indorses and beautifies the sin of the establishment, and gives it permanency and life and cor-

rupting power. There is no carnal power in all the world so mighty as a beautiful woman of fashion arrayed in a carnal dress.

For example, fashion prescribes the mode in which we shall live; it determines the rate of our expenses. In our day it has put the stamp of its approbation upon extravagance of living; and we Christian people fall into the line of the common life. There is a fascination in extravagance. An abundance which abounds and superabounds delights and attracts. But is it right? Is it right to pile up twenty dinners one upon another and call that a single meal? There is a point of morals here. This abundance and superabundance enervates the whole man. It pampers self and begets selfishness—a refined selfishness, yes; but selfishness nevertheless. Even a refined selfishness narrows a man and begets in him a shallow conception of life. There are moral consequences involved in an extravagant life. It cannot be kept up without money, and where money is needed there is always a temptation to dishonesty and crooked methods. It engenders worldliness, and is worldliness itself. Now living for this world, and nothing more, draws away all the sap from the spiritual roots of a man's being. There is a sacrilegious wrong when the sap of so much social benefit is concentrated in the flowering of a selfish luxury. If there be gross vice in the lower classes because of the energy of passion, there is among the upper

classes an accomplished epicurism, and a fastidious voluptuousness, and a strain of vanity which rots as it shines! I admit that where a man has means there is a place for refinement, and for a mansion, and for a banquet, and for elegant apartments, and for parlors that shall be studios of æsthetic beauty, and that shall breathe the inspiration of sculpture and painting. I admit that there is a lawful place for these; but I want to say that in this day of sharp and painful contrasts in human society, when ignorance stands face to face with scholarship, when the overfed look into the pinched and despairing faces of the underfed, when the occupants of mansions walk the same streets with the occupants of disease-breeding tenements, *there is a divine limit to these*. I am not going to place the limit, I am only going to say that any right-minded, generous humanitarian, any Christian governing himself by the love and example of Christ, can find that limit when he wishes to find it. I wish to say this also, that there is a special danger besetting the heart shut in by gilding and velvet and banquet: there is danger lest it shall not feel the electricity of the common humanity; there is danger lest it shall not hear the woes of life or see the ghastliness of evil; there is danger lest it be separated in thought and sympathy from the great multitudes, and be too far away from the jar of crime and the cry of complaint. No Christian should let the extravagance of fashion so sep-

arate him from his fellow-men, whom God has commissioned him to help, that he cannot know their wants or sympathize with their needs.

3. *Sin beautifies itself by putting on the wings of art.*

When sin would become tolerable, it comes to art and asks it to embellish it. When art has given it graceful forms and the witchery of color, it knows that it will be sought and admired. It knows that its suggestive carnality can find ingress into the soul through a picture and a statue when it can find ingress and opportunity for work in no other way. The realism of art has introduced more animalism into humanity than any other instrumentality. It has opened an avenue into the deepest depths of the soul for all manner of foul thoughts. Sin in the beauties of art is evil dressed in such a way that men cannot hate it. It is the harlotry of wickedness. No propagator of sin should call out more our honest red-hot scorn than the corrupt artist, or the corrupt poet, or the corrupt musician, who sells his skill and genius for the purpose of making evil thought enchanting. When an old heathen like Horace sings of love in such a way as to corrupt the very notion of love, we may find some argument of compassion in the fact that he was a heathen; but when a Heinrich Heine, with extraordinary wit and with most extraordinary wickedness, defiles with his fine touches the very interior nerve and nature of love, one can-

not heat the indignation which one expresses too hot. A white heat is too mild a heat to do justice to deserved scorn.

Art is the popular thing of the age. The world has more artists and more art schools now than it ever had before. It is fashionable to be posted in art. Every one who knows anything must be a critic in art and a lover of art. Sin recognizes this, and seeks through art an open door into thousands of homes and lives. In the name of art people go to the playhouse to witness the performances of actors of questionable character. In the name of art they fill their parlors with bathing nymphs and demi-monde scenes, which give rise to thoughts that are not Christian. I ask the question: Is it right for those who are washed in the blood of Christ, and who seek the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, to enter willfully into a social life where books and pictures and statuary and entertainments are unblushingly promotive of the growth of the lower man? Is it right to become accustomed to things which cause us to lose our Christian delicacy and reserve? Be assured that all thinking that is bad or impure dulls the edge of moral delicacy, and be assured also that the results are one and the same whether the soiled thought be suggested by the daub in the house of death, or by the masterpiece in the salon. In art, let us choose idealism and not realism. Let us see to it that the statuettes on our brackets, and the

statues on our pedestals, and the books of engravings on our tables, and the pictures on our walls shall be as pure in God's sight and as promotive of holiness as the prayers which we offer at our family altars. I argue for chaste sounds, and chaste colors, and chaste forms. These, to my mind, are the essentials of true art, as true art is approved by the laws of our holy God.

4 *Sin beautifies itself by putting on the wings of pleasing and attractive names.*

It decks itself in the beauties of *euphemisms*. It studiously robes itself in the robes of a poetic and a moral *nomenclature*. This has always been the method of sin, and it seems to be necessary to its success. It calls good evil and evil good, and in this way sears the conscience. It blackens the white and whitens the black. It stigmatizes "conscientiousness" as "morbidness," and it calls "dissipation" "good-fellowship." It thus blurs the distinction between right and wrong, and wrong and right. It thus crucifies a good thing by a bad name, and resurrects and dignifies a bad thing by a good name. It calls "silence with regard to evil" "shrewdness," "tact." To speak would offend. It should call such "silence" "treason" and "cowardice."

Perhaps in no sphere in life are the wings of a false nomenclature so widely spread as in the mercantile sphere. All manner of dishonesty is beautified and glossed over by euphemisms. It

is very often the case in business that the intellect of a man is keener than his moral sense. "It is hard for the man with the dollar-and-cent conception of the universe to read the Decalogue straight through the double lens of a twelve-per-cent. interest or of a fifty-per-cent. profit. In business many a man sets up a standard that slants considerably from the divine perpendicular." And yet things sound well as he describes them in mercantile terms. He lets himself down softly. "He refers to forgery as 'skilled penmanship.' He calls ingenious prevarication by the euphemistic title 'a white lie.' A white lie! That only reveals that the man who made it is a practiced and cultivated liar—a liar by trade. Reckless and dishonest speculation with other people's money he calls 'enterprise.' What right has any man to put another's money into fearful risk? Your venture may accidentally turn out well, and you may be able to pay him what you owe him, still it is dishonesty. To be honest through a fortunate accident is not to be honest at all." Business men, be assured it is a great sin to disregard, or even to underrate in the least degree, the eternal distinction between right and wrong; it is a great sin to view things in their wrong aspects and call things by their wrong names. "To give vice the names of virtue is a betrayal of God and a playing into the hands of the devil. Sin is throned and crowned and titled by leniency and circumlocution and dig-

nified names." I beseech you, be not deceived. Abhor sin. Believe in virtue, believe in truth, believe in honesty, believe in honor, believe in God, believe in God's law, and believe in God's providence.

My fellow-men, I ask you to consider the value of using right and natural and simple names in dealing with sin. Notice this fact :

*The real and true name of sin is the best exposé of sin.*

There is much in a name. A true name of sin is a picture of sin—a striking and vivid image of sin. It strips off its seductiveness and sets in the light its grossness. It robs it of half of its power by making it accurately known. Notice this fact :

*The real and true name of sin is the best protector and the best educator of our moral sense.*

"Conversation is educational, and the words which we use to communicate ideas fix these ideas firmly in the mind. By right words we want to fix right ideas in our souls. A fit name not only keeps distinct things that differ, but it keeps the snarl out of our ideas of things. A certain amount of distinct thinking is necessary for the maintenance of a conscience that shall work properly and speak definitively. We can play with words, but words will take their turn and play with us. An ambiguous word given to a bad thing saps from the bad thing its essential ugliness. For the education of the conscience 'lie' is better than 'prevaricate' ;

'adultery' is better than 'conjugal infidelity'; and the word 'theft' is better than 'defalcation'; it cuts closer to the marrow. The safest and best words are those which bring us most directly to the facts. If we want to keep good and evil apart from each other in our acts, we must keep them distinct in our thoughts. Now distinct thinking waits upon precise and honest wording." Notice this fact:

*The real and true name of sin is the best organ for the expression of a righteous indignation against sin.*

The expression of indignation against sin is the crying demand of our age. There is altogether too much smiling upon sin and apologizing for sin. Soft names are too plentiful. We see this in the way men deal with "the devil," the impersonation of all evil. Hosts of people stammer at his name. To say "the devil" sounds harsh and flat and vulgar to some. The name has in it something that makes them shrink. So they introduce substitutes. They weave wit and good-fellowship into the appellatives which they use. They speak of him as "His Satanic Majesty," or they name him familiarly "The Old Boy," or they call him "The D," using the first letter of his name. This is a straw, but it shows the direction of the popular wind. It is a coquetting with the devil. It is a putting out of the fire of indignation which should always burn in the soul against the Evil One who has cursed and is still cursing our world and our race.

“The age of clear, free, grand speech is dead. We have come to the age of euphemisms. Sentences are uttered in such a way that nobody can quote them. They are so rounded and oiled that it is impossible to retain them in one’s grip. The old grit has been lost; the old free piercing speech is gone, and we have fallen upon silken times. The popular preacher is the gentle, quiet, soothing, contemplative, almost silent preacher. His sermon is like a melodious Psalm, such as Peace would sing in a garden of flowers. It trembles and quivers with the softest notes. We hate the reformer, whose lips are iron-bound, and whose voice is like the shock of the tempest.” But this is our mistake, for we are still living in a world of destructive sin. God calls us this day back to His Book that we may learn how to speak of evil, and that we may school ourselves in the right nomenclature of sin. When His Church and His people speak of evil He wants them so to speak that men will feel He is speaking through them; He wants them to use words which are vivid pictures of sin, and which carry in them a fiery indignation of soul that has the power to scathe and burn to ashes all injustice and all wickedness. He wants them to use language which will call out antipathy to sin rather than pity for sin or condolence with the sinner. There is one supreme thing which God seeks to set forth with the clearness of the noonday be-

fore the immortal soul, and that is: *all sin is unclean ; all sin is abhorrent ; all sin is deadly.*

In closing allow me to say that the chief thing which we all need to reach is God's idea of sin. Have we God's idea of sin? Do we know its nature, do we know its awful consequences? We must know these things if we are ever to take the right attitude toward sin. How can we know these? There is only one way, but that one way is all-sufficient. It is this: full and complete fellowship with Jesus Christ, the pure and holy Son of God. We must let Christ so into our lives that we shall be able to look at all things through His eyes. He who looks at sin through Christ's eyes knows what sin is. Association with Him quickens one's sensitiveness to its presence. His tuition brings into prominence the spirituality of sin and teaches that it is not necessarily an overt act or a visible movement; it is often a thought, a play of imagination, a volition. In the harsh and unjust thought is the principle of manslaughter. His criticisms upon the popularities and conventionalities of the best society train one to look under the masks of beauty and etiquette and skill of art and glamour of fashion, and see the real and the controlling power, viz., the spirit of sin.

There are searching revelations of sin in Christ's life and in Christ's words; but the highest revelation of all is in Christ's cross. In the cross sin has

grown to its harvest; it has come to its full fruitage. What a brood of black things are gathered about the cross! Sin made the cross a necessity. Sin erected the cross. Sin drove the cruel crucifical nails. Sin crushed the crown of thorns into the holy temples of the Christ. Sin poised and thrust the murderous spear. Sin extorted the orphan cry. In the cross you see the tremendous daring of sin: *it is not afraid to strike at the very heart of God*. Now remember, all sin is one—the same in nature and in essence. It differs only in degree and manner of manifestation. Calvary strips the human world of all its masks. It uncovers it and reveals the depth of its wickedness. It throws sunlight on that black and foaming ocean of sin on which souls are borne to ruin. Philosophers, I cannot accept of your apologies for sin. Poets, I cannot appreciate the gorgeous drapery you throw over sin. Artists, I deplore the varnish and the tinsel with which, in this age of civilization, you attempt to embellish sin.

*In the light of Calvary I see sin in all its forms to be bitter, uncompromising antagonism to God.* It is the one thing of all things from which the immortal soul must be freed if it is ever to become God-like, and if it is ever to reach its possible goal, and if it is ever to unfold its inherent beauties throughout the ages of a happy eternity.

XIV.

PRAYER FOR INSTRUCTION IN ARITHMETIC.



## XIV.

### PRAYER FOR INSTRUCTION IN ARITHMETIC.

*"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."*—PSALM 90: 12.

LOOKED at in one aspect, human life is a mathematical problem. It is a sum in arithmetic. It is an example in simple addition. This being so, there is nothing more important than arithmetic. Arithmetic has a large place and play in the world. Because of its place and play it is our duty to master it. The study of arithmetic is not an idle thing. When we set our children at the task of learning figures, we are doing a great work for them. When we instruct them in simple enumeration, when we teach them to count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; when we teach them the table of decimals, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100—we are giving them the means by which they can estimate the duration of their earthly existence, upon which hang the momentous interests of eternity.

The table of numerals and decimals is a wonderful thing. It is like the alphabet. Take the Greek alphabet with its twenty-four letters, or symbols.

Can you estimate its value? Can you tell what it has done for the world? It has given visibility to the invisible realm of thought. It has brought human language under control. It has given the creations of Homer an earthly immortality. It has kept the orations of Demosthenes alive. It has given Paul a perpetual personality and power. It has introduced Jesus Christ Himself to the generations of men, and has caused His heavenly revelations to ring with power and thrill with joy down the ages. The alphabet! There is no greater blessing possessed by mankind than the simple alphabet. It has linked age with age, and era with era, and soul of man with soul of man. It is the storehouse of human thought. It is the golden casket which carries in it the precious gem of divine speech. It is the chariot of God in which eternal truth and infinite love ride.

Like the alphabet is the table of numerals and decimals. It carries in it all that is wonderful in mechanics and all that is great and serviceable in the sciences. By means of it men lay hold of the powers of nature, and tabulate them and handle them, and harness them to human enterprises. By it men deal with the wonderful works of God, and analyze them and master them. What the alphabet is in the world of mind, the table of numerals and decimals is in the world of matter.

Arithmetic is an essential to man. Without it he can do nothing, but with it he can do many

wonderful things. Take, for example, the construction of the American watch, which you carry in your pocket. It is a rival of the moving worlds in the solar system. But that wonderful piece of mechanism constructed by man is constructed wholly upon the principles of arithmetic. The cogs of the wheels are all counted, and they are increased or decreased proportionately as they are intended to mark hours or seconds. The watch is constructed and adjusted according to the laws of horology. This story is told of a certain American watch which passed through the hands of nearly all the jewelers of the city. I tell it in order to exalt the value of arithmetic. "The watch failed to keep accurate time. It was taken from one jeweler to another that it might be made to keep step with the motions of the earth and sun and stars. All who examined it pronounced it perfect; but nevertheless none of them could make it keep time. One perplexed watchmaker, more thorough by nature than his fellows, determined to find the flaw. For this end he counted the cogs in every wheel in the watch, and at last he found that there was one wheel which lacked one cog of the proper number. That solved the mystery. All the watchmakers in the universe could not make a watch keep step with the stars when one cog was missing from one of its wheels." Man in order to construct a perfect work must be an arithmetician.

To see the value and importance of arithmetic we must look into the works of God. God works mathematically. God is the great and infinite mathematician. Hence this inspired prayer offered to God: "Lord, teach us to number our days." Hence the Bible sets God forth as the teacher of mathematics. Theologians tell us that arithmetic is the handmaid of religion, and is a most telling witness of the existence of God as He reveals Himself in creation. They tell us that we cannot reach a true theology or a correct knowledge of God without a knowledge of arithmetic.

I have in my library two small pamphlets, written by a Boston friend, right in line with this thought. They should be owned by every intelligent Christian. These pamphlets are entitled "Atheism and Arithmetic" and "Number in Nature." Their design, you can surmise from their titles, is to show that there is number in nature and accurate arithmetic in the works of creation; therefore atheism, or the denial of the existence and overrule of God in the universe, is a gross absurdity. God proves His existence and His wisdom by the way He counts.

I ask you to walk with me among the works of Nature for the sole purpose of noting the play of arithmetic in the construction of God's works. And just here in this part of the sermon I mean to think leisurely and take my time. I mean at this point to add incident to incident. I mean to

condense a page or two of the pamphlets to which I have referred.

There is arithmetic in the cornfield. Arithmetic is here, just as truly as it is in the knitting factory, where every stitch is counted and every color accurately alternated. The kernels of corn are not thrown around the central shaft or cob indiscriminately or by chance. They are built around the central shaft or cob with all the skill of a master mechanism. There is a careful count and a careful arrangement of the myriads of rows. Chance might mix up and shake and shuffle buttons to all eternity without arranging two orderly rows of buttons on a boy's jacket; even so, chance might toss and tumble all the vegetable creation in the universe for ages without producing one ear of Indian corn with its kernels arranged in regular rows. But here in the cornfield are thousands of ears of corn with the kernels all arranged by some one who has an eye for symmetry and order, and who can reason and count.

But what is there peculiar in the field of Indian corn? What one thing with regard to number do we find wrapped up in the envelope of the carefully folded husk? This: the rows of kernels exist in even numbers. There are four rows, or eight rows, or sixteen rows, or twenty-four rows; never five rows, or fifteen rows, or twenty-one rows. Never an odd number. It is said that a miller who spent all his life grinding corn looked

for twenty-seven years to see if he could not find one ear containing an uneven number of rows of kernels, but in all those twenty-seven years of search he did not find a single ear. A story is told of a slave who, on being promised his freedom if he would find an ear of corn having an odd number of rows of kernels, went into the cornfield when the corn was earing, and, carefully opening a number of husks, deftly cut out a row of kernels from each, and then closed up the husks again. The corn grew and ripened, and closed up in its growth the vacant spaces. When it was gathered the slave searched for and found one of these ears with an odd number of rows, and presented it and claimed his freedom. There are the vast fields of corn, and this accurate count goes on year after year. Why? Because there is an intelligent Being constantly back of the universe. Because there is a God, and He has a will which He executes. Because there is a God, and He counts. Because there is a God, and He rules and governs the secret energies of the vegetative life in accordance with mathematical laws.

Nothing is so wonderful as the arithmetic in the vegetable world. In no sphere is there more counting and weighing and measuring. Every vegetable organism is built up by a most subtle chemistry of nature from the atoms derived from the earth and the air and the water. The germ-builders here are empowered by the great Creator

to draw from surrounding atoms in such specific quantity and in such constant proportion as will construct each particular structure in exact parts which can be expressed numerically. No chemist's prescriptions are made up with a thousandth part of the accuracy with which nature works here.

God is an arithmetician. There is number in the department of crystallization. God always counts when He makes the six-sided and the eight-sided and the twelve-sided crystal gem. Take, for example, a snow-storm. It is simply one magnificent exhibit of the operation of the laws of crystallization. If we narrow our study to a single snow-flake we will find that in it is the arithmetic of crystallization. There is arithmetic in every flake, for every snow-flake is accurately and geometrically constructed. The most delicate arithmetic and geometry reign supreme here. Last month I devoted two full weeks to the study of the snow-flake, and read almost everything in the Boston libraries centering on that subject. I studied it as a work of God; I studied it as I would study a chapter in Genesis, and took notes for future use. I found one book by a Brooklyn literary woman containing hundreds of plates with accurate drawings of snow-flakes taken from reality and life. Each drawing gave a distinct variety of snow-flake. No two were alike. But this was the peculiarity of all and of each—the number six was the active and leading factor in their construction.

The Great Arithmetician never missed count. For example, there were six glittering points symmetrically arranged in the single flake; or there were six little triangles so arranged as to make the flake into the shape of a six-pointed star; or the flake was built into the form of a wheel with six sides; or the flake was a little forest with six little trees, each little tree having six little branches. And thus on and thus on. These plates were all examined by the famous Agassiz, and they bear his indorsement for correctness. When I closed the reading of that book I said to myself: "Verily, each snow-storm is a gigantic arithmetical problem accurately worked out on God's slate."

God is an arithmetician. There is arithmetic in the plumage of the bird. There is a minute numerical accuracy in the measurement of the spaces occupied by the feathers, and in the gradation of the tints of the feathers, and in the adherence to a given pattern after which the feathers are woven. Take the peacock's feather. In it you have a remarkable example. In it a repeated and resplendent pattern must be produced by the united effect of the combination of the different and distinct tints marked, at fixed distances, on each-separate spray of each feather; and each point of each spray of each feather must be so constituted as to reflect a particular ray of the sunbeam. The whole structure must be made to grow out from the feather-roots inserted in the

living bird. Each spray requires a different development. Such is the gigantic task of constructing the plumage of a peacock. But it is undertaken and successfully executed. My fellow-men, there are a million chances to one against this structure being the work of blind force, which can neither see colors nor take account of measured space, nor delight in the glorious result. Cicero says: "It would be easier to believe that a million Greek letters accidentally fell upon the ground in the form of Homer's melodious fables, complete in sense and complete in the scansion of the hexameters than to believe that nature is a thing of chance."

God is an arithmetician. There is arithmetic in the skies. God counts the stars and gives them all their names. He counts them and places them so accurately that they are a celestial timepiece, with jeweled wheels, measuring not only seconds and minutes and hours and days, but measuring years and decades and centuries and millenniums.

God is an arithmetician. There is arithmetic in the construction of man. The heart throbs according to arithmetic, and the pulse beats according to arithmetic. Wisely and beautifully did David sing three thousand years ago concerning the construction of man. Addressing God with reference to his physical frame, he says, "In the book of patterns, or anatomical drawings, all my members were written and delineated, in the days

when not one of them was fashioned." Christ refers to the arithmetic which pertains to our heads, and by it illustrates God's superintendence and providential care relative to His people. When we see how God counts and counts and counts everywhere in nature, we can believe every word uttered by Jesus when He says, "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Numbering the hairs of our head is marvelous care-taking upon the part of our Heavenly Father, but it is God-like, and it has a universal corroboration. It is God-like, and nothing less particular and minute could satisfy God.

God is an arithmetician. Nature proclaims it; our physical frame proclaims it; the written Word proclaims it. Listen to the written Word: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, who bringeth out their host by number. He calleth them all by their names, because He is strong in power; not one faileth." Again, "He hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." According to these Scriptures the mind of God is a mind that counts, and weighs, and proportions, and calculates, and measures, and regulates.

God is an arithmetician. But why ring the changes upon this fact? There are two reasons

why : first, this fact shows us that our God is He to whom we should offer the prayer of the text. He can teach us to number as no other can. He can endow us with the wisdom of calculation, and He will if we ask Him. He can make us God-like in the arithmetical faculty and power, and He will if we ask Him. Second, this fact shows us that the power of calculation, the arithmetical faculty, alone can give the wisdom requisite for the most effective use of things. God is a proficient and perfect worker, and He is so because He calculates and weighs and measures and estimates the possibilities of things. When we ask instruction in arithmetic, to whom should we go but unto Him? Handing back to Him the old year and receiving from Him the new year, let this be our prayer : " Lord, teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

At first thought it would seem as though we needed not to be instructed on such a subject. It would seem as though man's mortality were evident, and as if it were an impossible thing for him to hide it from himself. Yes. But, nevertheless, he does hide it from himself, and on this account no prayer is more important than the prayer of the text. The demonstration of human mortality is in a hundred generations of the dead. It is in the ground beneath our feet, which is billowy with graves full of the dust which once lived in human forms and spoke and was loved. It is in the long

line of the one hundred thousand human lives which every day pass the boundary-line from time into eternity and melt into nothingness before our eyes. It is in every tick of the clock which marks the passage of some immortal soul and declares the death-rate of the world. It is in our fading vision, in our failing health, and in our wrinkles. It is in the dying-beds and the coffined forms and the empty homes of the closing year. It is in the knell, and in the shroud, and in the mattock, and in the grave. Yet, withal, humanity at large does not realize the mortality of humanity. The woman dresses and dines and dances, all forgetful of the end. The man busies himself in pleading causes, writing opinions, building railroads, managing banks, all unconscious that he will leave these some day. So thoroughly unrealized is the mortality of man, that the first condition of right living, the fundamental thought of a wise life, is ignored and undreamed of by thousands and thousands. There are multitudes who have not put the kingdom of God into their lives, neither first nor last nor anywhere. Oh, what a condition for a rational being to be in, and to be contented to be in—unprepared to die, unforgiven, Christless, with no everlasting home, and the days passing, running, flying. O careless one! pray the prayer of the text. Your madness is the wildest madness in the universe, and your folly is unmatched folly. I call upon you to deal with life in a business way,

for there is no business so important and so far-reaching. Let the chimes of the year startle you, and call you to your Heaven-assigned mission.

But why should we number our years? That is the question. Until that question is answered we can breathe no faith and no desire into this prayer.

I answer, we should not number our days that we may mourn and fret, and become misanthropic, and sing dirges, and give up to a premature old age, saying: "Life is nothing; it is so diminutive that it is not worth living." No; we are to number our days that we may form a just estimate of the duration of human life; that we may feel how rapidly the days are passing; that we may see the certainty of the end, and how liable we are to be cut down. We are to number our days in order that we may be helped in the business of life insurance—that insurance which secures life eternally, and renders it full of everlasting profit.

But allow me to use arithmetic in dealing with this prayer, given us by this oldest of all of the sacred songs of praise possessed by the Church of God. Let me *enumerate* some of the teachings of this prayer, which was first offered by Moses, who composed this ninetieth Psalm in the wilds of the wilderness. I have three points which I wish to present. In presenting them I wish only to sketch them in outline and not paint them in full. My first point is this: —

I. *The prayer of the text teaches that we are to deal with human life by parts.*

We cannot profitably deal with life in the wholesale, we must deal with it in the retail. That is the way God gives us time, moment by moment; just as He gives the gold, grain by grain. We are only able to handle life in short periods. A year! No man is equal to a year. A month! No man is equal to a month. A day! That is the longest period any man can handle. Let a man finish up a day well, and he does magnificently. The best works are those which are finished particle by particle, each particle being wrought up to the highest possible state of perfection. Besides this, there is another consideration. If time is to be spoiled, it is better to spoil only a day than to spoil a month, or to spoil a year. Brethren, although God gives us time so sparsely, yet none of us estimates the full value of time. The individual moment is not looked upon as a precious grain of gold. I could prove this in many ways; but let us be satisfied with one way. Take as an example the names of our various methods of getting rid of time. These indicate our undervaluation of time. Notice some of these names: "pastime," i.e., what consumes and uses up the hours easily; "amusement," i.e., what prevents musing or meditation; "diversion," i.e., what turns aside; "entertainment," i.e., what holds in suspense or equilibrium. These words, which are in common use, indicate and reveal a

wrong condition of thought and feeling about time. They characterize it as a drug in the market to be got rid of at any price and in any quantity, whereas it is the most precious trust we have. The chemist, filling his bottle, pours carelessly into it a quantity of common tincture; but when he comes to the rare and potent compound, which the tincture is intended merely to dilute and to carry, he measures it drop by drop. So God, who gives other things in profusion and largely, when He comes to give us time, gives it moment by moment.

There is a value in dividing life into days according to the text, and counting the days. By this method we get two opposite views of life, and both views are needed. Because of these two opposite views, life is neither overestimated nor underestimated. By dividing life into days,

1. We see how short human life is. Its days are limited. We must see the shortness of human life. There is nothing that the Bible presents so forcibly. I do not believe that there is a single book in the Bible that omits to present the shortness of human life. It is presented not to paralyze man, but to solemnize and stimulate. The shortness of human life is a cry against procrastination. It bids us carry our purposes into execution at once. It emphasizes the value of the nick of time. The shortness of life is a protest against non-watchfulness. Against the man who gives a whole week to idleness it cries, "Shame!" A whole week is

seven days. A man can travel from Sandy Hook to the Golden Gate in seven days. The shortness of life shows the wondrous grace of God. He grants an eternity of glory as a reward of a few years of holy living.

2. But we reach a second and opposite view of human life by dividing it into days and counting the days. We see how long it is. It seems far longer when looked at in days than it does when looked at in months and years. When we take a day and see how much can be crowded into a day, and then when we see how many days are in a life, life seems great. Divide anything up into parts and you magnify it. You are acquainted with the way a certain wise husband took to give his wife an idea of how much one thousand dollars is. She had no idea of money. Her purchases were enormous. It happened one day that her eye fell upon a magnificent gem-ring and she coveted it. It cost one thousand dollars. But what were one thousand dollars to her in comparison with the ring? Of course her husband consented to its purchase. What else could a dutiful and affectionate husband do? But he struck upon this method of educating his wife concerning the great price of the ring. He instructed his banker to send her the one thousand dollars in small pieces—pennies, dimes, quarters. In came the money, bag full and bag full. She never had such an idea of a thousand dollars before. When the money

was piled before her it positively alarmed her. The price of the ring went up a hundredfold and was considered at once an extravagance, which she of her own option abandoned. A human life broken up into days is like one thousand dollars broken up into coppers and fractional silver pieces.

Know the value of *days*! That is the way to reach a high appreciation of a human life. But how can I know the value of days? In this way. Mark how much of history has been crowded into single days. Let me give you one instance to study at your leisure. I take it from the life of Jesus Christ as recorded by the Evangelist Matthew. Have you ever noticed the closing chapters of Matthew's Gospel, those chapters which include the last third of the Gospel? Have you ever noticed how few of the days of Jesus are recorded in these chapters? See what large space is given to the closing twenty-four hours of His earthly life. The history of that one day fills chapter after chapter. These chapters occupied with the last day of His life give us an idea of the grandeur of His whole life. When we pray, "Lord, teach us to number our days," we ask God that we may see somewhat of the fullness of work and glory of which our life is capable. The second chief point which I wish to present is:

II. *The prayer of the text teaches us that there is a right way and a wrong way of counting the days of human life.*

All past days are not to be counted in reckoning up the life which is behind us, although all coming days are to be counted in reckoning life as it comes. It is not good spiritual arithmetic to treat the past and the future alike. There are days in the past which have a history, but there are days there which have no history. There are historic gaps in life. There are blanks in life. Take a concrete case. There is a silence of a whole year in the biography of David. For twelve months he sung no song of praise, thought no great thoughts, and sent nothing good down to posterity. Both harp and conscience were silent. When he lived in a spiritual atmosphere and did spiritual deeds his life was recorded; but when he stepped down from spirituality into carnality there were great blank leaves in his book of life. Prior to the period when the prophet Nathan pointed the finger of reproof at him and brought his conscience back to activity there was an awful waste of a whole year.

What we notice in the story of David we notice in the story of Israel. There was a blank in the story of the Jewish nation, a waste of forty years. This wilderness period proclaimed to the world that golden opportunities had been trampled under foot. But this gap is nothing to the gap which has since followed. What a historic gap there has been in the history of the Jews, the covenant-people of God, during the Christian era! The

gap consists of centuries of vagabondage and wandering. If the Israelites had been true to themselves and to God they might have had nineteen centuries of magnificent history. We cannot forget what they produced during the fifteen centuries prior to the coming of Christ. They gave the world the moral law which has been the basis of all true and helpful legislation ever since. They built up the Book of God, which to this day instructs mankind and leads all true human thinking. We owe them our loftiest conceptions of God, our purest morals, and our highest ideals of human rights. How grandly the inspired Paul lauds them! His words flame and glow. "Who are the Israelites? To them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." The living which Paul, with an honest and patriotic pride, recounts is grand living. Why was not that living duplicated and reduplicated during the past centuries? The answer is plain: the Israelites proved untrue to their God. They crucified their Messiah, and kept recrucifying Him. Nineteen hundred years, and no prophet; nineteen hundred years, and no world-thinker and leader—nothing but a by-word, nothing but wandering. What a lamentable blank! and that, too, while it was among the possibilities

for Jerusalem to continue the city of God, the leader of all humanity.

We need to be taught on this line, viz., what days to count as we review the past. We need to be taught how to distinguish between moral units and moral ciphers. Days spent for self and in the service of the world are moral ciphers; only days spent for the glory of Christ are moral units, moral tens, moral hundreds, and moral thousands. Everything which has been done for Christ is gloriously immortal, but that and that only is gloriously immortal.

“ We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breaths ;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart-throbs.  
He lives most who thinks most, feels the noblest,  
And acts the best.”

Methuselah's nine hundred and sixty-nine years are no match for the one hundred and twenty years of Moses.

Fronting the new year, I ask you, Are you satisfied with the character of your days? Are you worked up to your highest possibilities? See you nothing beyond?

Here you are at the age of twenty: with the faults of childhood upon you still; pettish, ungoverned, insatiable. A soul twenty years of age should have better characteristics than these. Are you what you would be?

Here you are at thirty: with the faults of youth

upon you still ; vain, inconsiderate, pleasure-loving. A soul at thirty years of age should be considerable of a man. Look at Christ at thirty. His plans of life were matured. Magnificent purposes were beating in His heart. At thirty He undertook the redemption of the world. A man of thirty should have boundless hopes and daring enterprises.

Here you are at forty : still wearing the badge of early folly ; proud, passionate, sensual. The soul of forty should be characterized by a face firmly fixed heavenward. The man of forty should be under complete control, all his faculties alive to goodness, his character beautiful for its wholeness and oneness. At forty are you what you would like to be ?

Here you are at sixty : but you are not yet wise with the experience of life. Selfish still, unsympathetic still, under the chain of evil habit still. A man of sixty should be a fire-pillar in society, a formulator of public sentiment, a wholesome example, a wise and respected judge, a conscience in the community. The outlines of finality and perfection should be shining in his character. At sixty are you what you would like to be ?

Ask your soul the question : Soul, understandest thou what true manhood is ? What is it in man that is man ? What differentiates him from the animal creation around him ? It is thy faculties, O Soul. Broad intellect, moral sense, the spiritual nature, the endowment of sentiments which inspire

the idea of purity, of self-denial, of holy love, and of supersensuousness. Art thou observing the law of love, and living above the things of self? Art thou taking hold of invisible qualities, invisible states, and the invisible realities which become the child of God? This is the only way to make life grand, and to fill our days and years with that which is valuable and worthy of being counted.

III. *The prayer of the text teaches us that God's desire is that we shall spend human life wisely.*

That means that we shall live for God; for there is no wise life apart from Him. All who ignore God in life are denominated fools by the Good Book. And it is wonderful how many fools are introduced to us by the Bible. Men fools and women fools. Just see! There is the builder who built his house upon the sand—a man fool. There is the rich farmer who laid up riches in barns instead of in his soul—another man fool. There are the five sleeping watchers with untrimmed lamps—a whole troop of fools, women. The world is filled with men and women lacking wisdom.

There are different types of life, and wisdom in living consists in choosing the highest type, and living it. There is the Abraham type, and there is the Lot type. According to spiritual arithmetic, the values of these lives contrast but do not compare. Lot's life shows us how contracted a man's religious life may be, and yet that man be a child

of God. Abraham's life shows us how grand the religious life of a man may be and ought to be. It shows us God's ideal for His children. Abraham was cultured, under the tuition of God, in spiritual arithmetic, and he regulated his life by this arithmetic. Spiritual arithmetic taught him, each day, to add to his graces, and to subtract from his sinful habits, and to multiply his holy endeavors, and to divide his duties, and to proportionate his thanksgivings to his mercies.

Fronting the new year, let us remember that our life is before us as the keyboard of the organ is before the musician. The musician knows the possibilities of the keyboard. Through it he can translate into real life the whole world of music. Through it he can make the master-genius of the past live again. Through it he can resurrect the grand musical thoughts of the old masters, and send them vibrating anew in the air, and thrilling anew through human souls.

Fronting the new year, let us remember that life is before us as the broad canvas is before the landscape-painter. The painter knows the possibilities of the canvas. He knows that there are scenes in nature not yet translated into the colors of his art. There was a time, I believe, when landscape-painters were mourning the poverty of their subjects. They felt that all of the grand outlooks had been committed to the canvas, and that the future would consist only in copying.

Their anxiety was useless. Soon there was discovered an unknown marvel of nature, an unexplored solitude of grandeur. God opened the Yosemite, full of rich and new subjects for brush and pencil. Men talk of the limitations of life. To the Christian there are no limitations of life. The possibilities of human life are as inexhaustible and as illimitable as the endowment and the duration of the immortal soul. This is what we wish to write upon our hearts as we leave the old year and step across the threshold into the new year. Our years are numbered, but the influences possible to our years are unnumbered and never-dying. We can, by the help of divine grace, fill the coming year with deeds as eternal as the eternal life of God. To do this is to apply our hearts unto wisdom. To do this is to realize the prayer of the text.

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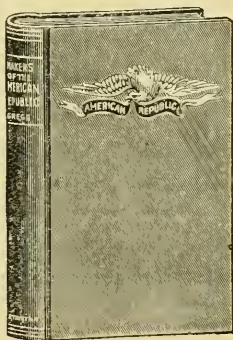
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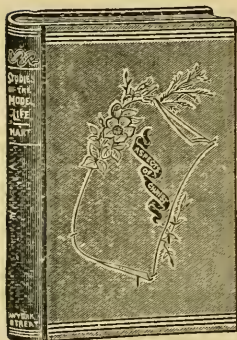
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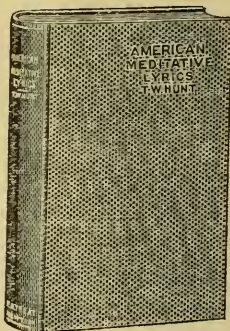
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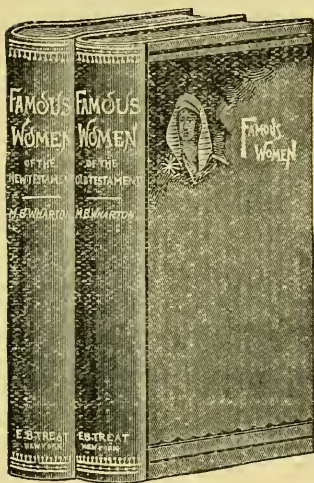
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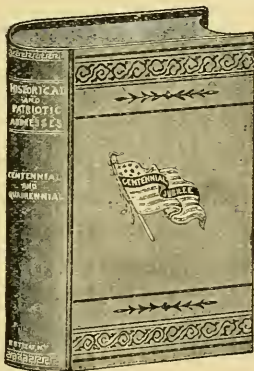


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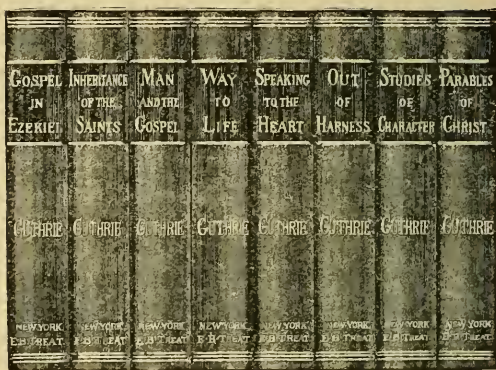
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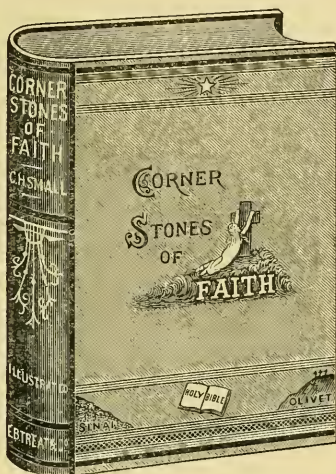
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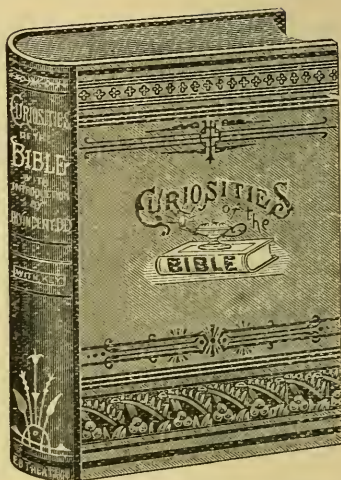
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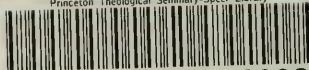


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